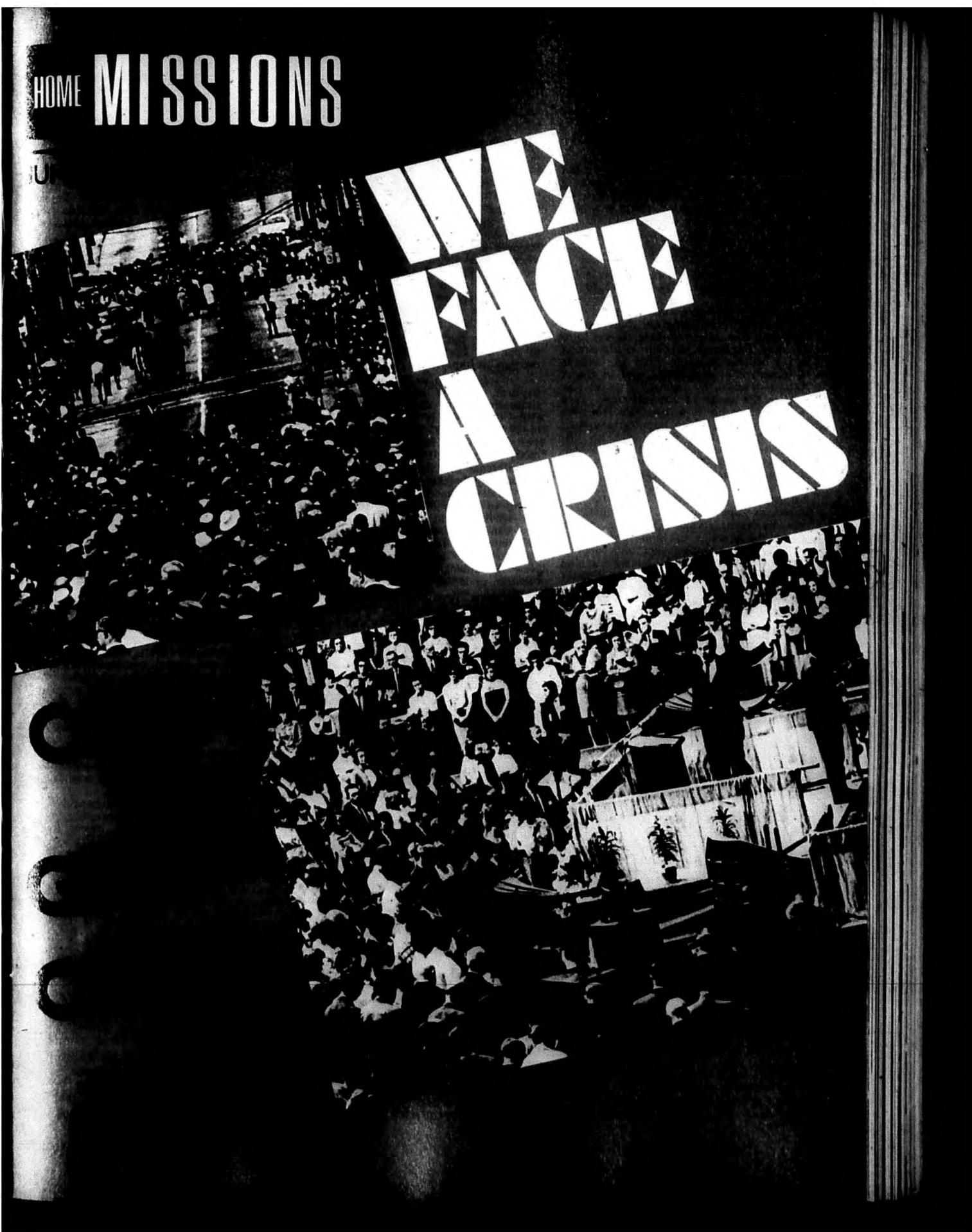


HOME

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CRISIS



LETTERS

From Our Readers

Distorting Baptist Practice

This is not my first, and probably not my last, objection to the trend taken in recent months in our magazine. There appears to be a deliberate attempt to major on ideas and interpretations held by the minority in our Convention. Evidence of this effort is seen in the nature of articles accepted for publication.

The latest example is the article in the April issue entitled, "Divided We Stand, United We Fall." It is a confusing conglomeration of much that is good and much that is misleading and unscriptural. George F. Lee admits that the correct form of New Testament baptism is immersion of the believer in water. Then he proceeds to minimize its importance, and to distort Baptist practice, by saying, "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." Where did he discover this astounding information? According to him, "Baptists historically have not held to immersion as the only acceptable mode of baptism." I would challenge not only his authority in making such a statement, but also the implications of that statement. When a Baptist church ceases the practice of immersion as the only mode of baptism, not only does it cease to obey the clearly defined teaching of Scripture, it ceases to be a Baptist church in the light of Baptist history. Southern Baptists, meeting in Convention session in 1963, apparently agreed with this as they adopted the statement entitled, "The Baptist Faith and Message," see Article VII. . . .

W. H. Bell
Redlands, Calif.

• My friend, George Lee . . . has quoted 1 Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup," as a proof text for open communion. I find myself in complete disagreement . . . for . . . he has taken that verse out of . . . context. . . . In verse 27, Paul warns against eating "unworthily," while in verse 29, he tells what it is to eat "unworthily," stating that it is to eat "not discerning the Lord's body." If a man is partaking of the Lord's Supper for any reason other than in "remembrance" of the death of Christ, he is eating and drinking "unworthily." . . .

Moreover, taking Lee's interpretation is questionable for another reason, for suppose an unbaptized drunkard (or a baptized one) comes into the service and says that he feels worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper. Will he be welcomed? I do not know of any of the major denominations which teach that the Lord's Supper is for unbaptized persons. They do not leave the matter wholly to the individual! If Baptists practice "open communion" they either are recognizing sprinkling, sprinkling of infants, and immersion which is not believer's baptism, or they are saying that the Lord's Supper is open to any person, baptized or not,

and believer or not. This most certainly is not the New Testament position, nor has it ever been the Baptist position. . . .

Paul says that if the churches are "divided" (verse 18) or if there are "heresies" (verse 19) "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper" (verse 20). Suppose a church comes together to eat when it has division, "this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." And suppose Baptists and several other denominations sit down together. They are not agreed in doctrine. . . . If one is right, the other is wrong. Therefore, there is "heresy."

Paul says that in such case, "this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." "Open communion" is impossible. . . .

Lee also is in error on . . . baptism. Suppose some Baptists of the sixteenth century did practice sprinkling. Does that make it right for Baptists of today to accept it? He says that the New Testament "mode has been interpreted correctly since about 1640." Without debating his inference that they were not practicing it correctly before that time, we simply ask, are we as Baptists of today not trying to follow the New Testament in our teaching and practices? If we are, how can we possibly approve of, or give full fellowship to, churches which teach doctrines that cannot be found in the New Testament, such as sprinkling for baptism, or infant baptism. . . .

The New Testament makes very clear that baptism is "immersion of a believer," and requires proper authority and purpose, for it to be New Testament baptism. Those who follow the New Testament cannot accept for baptism something which is not baptism. Moreover, the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ makes clear our task to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them whatsoever he has commanded. . . .

To take the position that Baptist denominational groups have no say over what the churches believe or practice, if carried to its ultimate meaning, would open the door for Catholics, Mormons, Pentecostals or any other church groups to ask for and receive fellowship in Baptist circles. The chaos that would create easily can be seen. . . .

Lee speaks of freedom of the churches, but I feel that he needs to remember that it is freedom under the Lordship of Christ. Men are free in doctrine and practice in their churches, only as they follow the clear teachings of Christ and the New Testament. When they depart from that, they are disobedient to Him who is the "head." In Romans 14 Paul is talking about a New Testament church, and the unity of brethren in that church. To understand the unity which binds churches, it is better to turn to Ephesians 4 where we read of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc." This is the unity the Lord wants churches to have with one another. It has been strict adherence to this principle which has made Southern Baptists what they are. If they abandon this position, splintering and dissolution quickly will follow. . . .

Let Baptists recognize that they can

and must have love and spiritual unity with every person who is born again but let them also recognize that a New Testament church has clear doctrinal mis beyond which it dares not go.

Joe T. Obie
Jackson, Miss.

Why Paul Harvey?

For several months now we have been encouraged by the freedom which you have shown in your editorial policy. Coupled with the resolutions passed at the last meeting of the Convention, it has seemed as if there might be hope that those who are not reactionary—politically, socially and theologically—might have some influence. . . . However, several other developments seem to indicate that the mood of this Convention might just as well be moving in the other direction: the "Landmark" position assumed officially by the Arkansas Baptist Convention regarding "alien immersion" and "closed communion"; similar positions adopted by several local associations in various states; the stance regarding theological thought taken by some seminary administrators, as Soileau has pointed out. One does not need to be very old to recall the disgraceful treatment of Ralph Eliot by the trustees of Midwestern Seminary! . . .

Now we have learned that the Home Mission Board's Division of Evangelism has chosen Paul Harvey as one of its spokesmen on behalf of the Crusade of the Americas. One hardly objects to Harvey's having an opportunity to offer his witness. However, he is primarily a political and social commentator, not a religious leader, and the positions which he espouses are well-known. It would appear the Home Mission Board has deliberately chosen to direct its appeal primarily to those who find Harvey's political views congenial. This is tantamount to endorsing Harvey's views as no one representing a more moderate viewpoint has been invited as a complement to Harvey's appeal. . . .

As said earlier, one could hardly object to Harvey's having an opportunity to witness. One must, however, object to the covert endorsement of politically extreme views by the Home Mission Board. If the Board's action is not covert endorsement of a spokesman of political reaction, why was not a moderate, such as Brooks I say, invited to complement Harvey's appeal? . . .

Garnett L. White,
Terry L. Jones, Jr.,
Ronald Hayes, Jr.,
G. Wray, Mich; I. R.
Bradley, Patricia
Clifton White
Nashville, Tenn

Facing Life As It Is

A few years ago I almost dropped my subscription because the magazine seemed to have no life or much to say. Now I can truthfully say it's one of the most

continued

HOME MISSIONS

interesting magazines I read. I am so glad Baptists have such a magazine and are living life as it really is.

We can live with our heads in the sand but all we come up with is "eyes that don't see and ears that don't hear." Keep up the "good" work and God will bless.

Mrs. D. Clark
Utica, Mo.

• You are giving the people of our denomination a true picture of what is going on in our land today. I appreciate reading articles that bring to light conditions as they are. Southern Baptists should offer a prayer of thankfulness that the Herbert Caudill and David Fites were finally released from Cuba. These men and their families are real heroes of the faith. Only God will ever know the anxieties and heartaches they must have suffered. . . .

Chaplain
Douglas H. Sowards
Ft. Hood, Tex.

More on the Covenant

The arrival of your magazine is one of the highlights of the month at our house. It is really encouraging to have one of our denominational organs leading the way in taking an honest look at the society we live in, in the light of the gospel. Lofton Hudson's article on the church covenant and George Lee's article on unity in the current issues are two of the best. Such articles offer help and guidance to all of us as we endeavor to be faithful to our calling in the complex situations of contemporary life. . . .

Bob Smith
Chesterfield, Mo.

• . . . To me, the church covenant has never been "sacrosanct" or a "sacred cow" but it has real meaning and significance. It might be more effective to apply it to our own hearts with genuine sincerity than to throw it out the window! . . .

Since when did such words as "holiness," "spirituality" and "ordinances" become "museumish"? By whose decree or on what basis is a covenant "out-of-date"? . . .

The simple fact is that the church covenant was intended to be just that—covenant between blood-bought believers who are fellow-members of the same local church family. It never was intended to be a manifesto, in detail, of our total ministry in every area of life. The New Testament does not bind us more closely together in a sense of mutual responsibility and understanding so that we could more actively do as churches what our Lord commanded us to do. . . .

Hudson says that "advancing the kingdom of our Saviour" will not be done by being mindful of the rules of our Saviour. Rules are guidelines for conduct. Our Lord gave us more than "principles."

He gave us commands. He is our absolute Lord, not just our advisor. . . .

The author refers to "museumish" words in the covenant. I have a feeling that many people would have some difficulty with such words as "facades, milieu, camaraderie, paranoid and pseudo-autonomy" used in his suggested "Commitment."

Other references in the article are cheapening and nauseating. The world has always had its own vocabulary. It has been demonstrated time and again that the Holy Spirit can help us to "communicate" without stooping to the level of adopting the world's vocabulary. The weakness of the church covenant lies not in its language but in lack of dedication to the Lordship of Christ. . . .

K. Owen White
Tucson, Ariz.

• The sparkling relevance of the magazine stimulates all—even those who are irritated by its vigorous treatment of main issues. Southern Baptists are being deeply affected by the work you and your associates are doing. In time, perhaps, you'll turn us all around! . . . The 100-year-old church covenant that many of our churches still circulate . . . is indeed obsolete in phraseology, but Hudson's suggested improvement, "A Church Commitment," also uses some technical words that most Baptists would not readily understand. For instance, "facades," "milieu," "camaraderie," "paranoid" and the hyphenated monster, "pseudo-autonomy"—all of these need to be replaced by down-to-earth, easily comprehended synonyms. They smack too heavily of bookish jargon, and I see no help to be had in discarding outmoded words for others that are only in mode for those with better-than-average education. . . .

Nevertheless, Hudson has made a significant suggestion. With a little simplification his version of what Baptists ought to be saying to each other and to God in commitment would be a thoroughly understood and stimulating statement. . . .
C. DeWitt Matthews
Kansas City, Mo.

• . . . I appreciate the article . . . by Hudson. . . . I agree with what it said and liked the suggested church commitment. My church is one which reads the covenant every month at the Lord's Supper service, and our pastor is continuously having to browbeat the congregation about attending on that Sunday night. . . .

Joe Cutsinger
Riverside, Calif.

• . . . Reading "trash" such as this is not my idea of money well spent for reading material. Why hasn't he "gone out from us, because he is not of us," instead of hanging on because Baptist "bread and butter" money tastes good. . . .

I am a young mother who has studied the concepts of the church covenant, and I think it is good enough for another hundred years or more. . . .
Mrs. Leroy Rogers
Magazine, Ark.

HOME MISSIONS

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INDEX

LETTERS	2
EDITORIAL	4
EXECUTIVE'S WORD	8
ONE YEAR LATER: WE FACE A CRISIS	
A Statement Concerning the Crisis	6
Grappling with the Soul of America	12
Harper Shannon	
JESUS, THE SECULAR PIETIST	14
John Nichol	
THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION	18
Chevis Horne	
BIBLE DISTRIBUTION: A Case for Objectivity	21
CRUSADE OF THE AMERICAS In Indiana: Contagious Cooperation	22
Al Shackleford	
ON TV: A National Response	28
DIALOGUE TOWARD UNDERSTANDING	30
Professors Roy Fish and William Pinson	
COOPERATIVE CARING	34
Helen Turlington	
CHAPLAINS PRAYER CALENDAR	36
SBC CHURCH JOINS NEGRO CONVENTION	38
ENCOUNTER	39

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EDITORIALS

by Walker L. Knight

The Escape Hatch

Groups and institutions within the nation are moving toward polarization on two positions as they propose answers to the present crises. One answer encompasses archaism in an attempt to maintain society as it always has been, and the other wants futurism in an attempt to create society all over. One points back to a dream that never was and the other points to a vision that may never be, and in the process each escapes responsibility for what presently is.

To take the escape hatch in either direction is to opt out of the present, despite the fact that each position may contribute to clarification of the alternatives.

To be responsible demands the achievement of a high degree of awareness, and society appears to be cooperating to an exceptional degree toward informing us. However, there are subtle dangers with the type of information we receive. First, most of our information is superficial, especially from television and the newspapers. The viewer hears a one-minute capsule of some problem or he reads the headline and lead paragraph of a news story and forms his opinion or allows the news to reinforce an opinion already held.

Second, James Reston of the *New York Times* underlines another danger when he writes that "the American mind . . . is being drugged by facts and diverted from reality. Every hour and every day it hears and reads the most astonishing things but is not astonished."

Our tendency is to be apathetic in the face of such overwhelming problems, as we are diverted from reality. Southern Baptists, in a remarkable display of awareness, last year adopted the statement concerning the crisis in our nation, and during the year we

moved toward responsibility in implementing the statement through our agencies. However, most of what has happened during the year has been to create only further awareness and to avoid action that contributes to the easing of the problems.

Concerned Christians can make a contribution on two fronts. One front is within the church and the other is within society, and of necessity, there will be an overlapping and interplay between the two. Sometimes the priority will lie in one area and sometimes in the other. In other words, the agenda for some of us is to work for renewal of the church, and for others the agenda is to work for the renewal of society. Hopefully, both efforts will serve the same end—relating men rightfully to God and relating men rightfully to other men.

John Gardner in an article calling for a self-renewing society has a word that applies to both fronts: "The responsible critic comes to understand the complex machinery by which change must be accomplished, finds the key points of leverage, identifies feasible alternatives, and measures his work by real results. The irresponsible critic never exposes himself to the tough tests of reality."

While a few like Bishop James Pike are giving up on the church, others like Gibson Winter are coming to see that the church is actually the freest of society's institutions. It took a few radical attacks by students and blacks for us to discover this, but we can see that the church owes no allegiance to any other group, despite the fact that some churches have given allegiance to others.

The church, possessed by the Spirit of Christ and possessor of the Word of God, has within her the dynamic for renewal. As Gardner said of the nation,

we also might say of the church and of Christians, "Our problem is not to find better values, but rather to be faithful to those we profess—and to make those values live in our institutions, which we have yet to do."

Renewal depends upon openness (to the Spirit, the Word and our brethren) and we exclude change when we close our minds, acting as though we possessed all truth and understood what we possess. We cannot afford to stagnate in a process of inbreeding where we hear only those we have trained, who have heard only others like unto ourselves. Somehow a breakthrough has to occur to provide variety, alternatives, choices and encouragement of initiative.

The process of renewal depends upon the development to the fullest of human resources, the removal of obstacles to individual fulfillment and the emphasis upon education, lifelong learning and self-discovery—all of which are present within the meaning of discipleship.

While our desire is for the one, all inclusive solution to the national crisis, it will escape us. The solution actually consists of thousands of minor solutions hammered out on the local anvil, where each of us is willing to become aware of the community in which he lives and of the larger community in which his neighbors live. With such an awareness we can forge solutions. There are roles for every Christian and every church that are not difficult to find in such a context.

For those who want some rays of hope, we can point to churches as scattered as the Washington, D.C. area, to Atlanta, to Memphis, to Birmingham, to San Antonio, and on across the nation. These and hundreds of others are discovering meaningful ways in which to express their faith in Christ in both word and deed. ■

HOME MISSIONS

The Home Mission Board finds itself at the heart of an extremely significant dialogue in Southern Baptist life. Churches, pastors and individual Christians are grappling with questions that concern their appropriate relationship to the pressing social and moral issues of our day.

Southern Baptists have an honorable record of active involvement in some areas of public concern, including religious liberty and the sale and use of alcoholic beverages. The perplexing question for us seems not to be whether we should be involved in social and moral concerns. We have done this historically. The question appears to relate to whether we will dare to grapple creatively with the fresh problems of our generation. To display this kind of courage is to follow in the steps of men like Roger Williams, John Clarke and Isaac Backus, who suffered for the cause of religious liberty when it was a new concept and was by no means a popular cause with the majority.

The urgent public issues which are to the fore in these turbulent times lie principally in the area of civil rights, arising from the concern that every citizen shall have access to all privileges available to other citizens. Racial dimensions enter because in many places racial minorities have been denied privileges of education, employment, housing, voting and individual growth open to most citizens. Disadvantaged white people face the same kinds of problems. In their frustration some have lashed out in hate and violence, crime and anarchy.

In such a situation what is the Christian posture? Can those who are blessed with privilege and opportunity ignore the cries of the depressed? Can we select certain areas of public concern in which to be involved and deliberately omit others?

Southern Baptists believe the Bible is the Word of God. We believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We want to be true to him. We recognize that our central mission is spiritual: we are to follow in the steps of him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Perhaps we would do well to remember, however, that the Lord who gave us the parable of the prodigal son also gave us the parable of the good Samaritan. The Christian way calls for compassionate compassion for the suffering as well as forgiveness for the sinning.

Some fear that the "crisis statement" issued by the SBC in its 1968 meeting will minimize evangelism, ultimately if not immediately. We are aware that some religious bodies in our nation have become so involved in social issues that



THE EXECUTIVE'S WORD

By Arthur B. Rutledge
Executive Secretary-Treasurer, HMB

they seem to have lost their evangelistic thrust. I believe we must and can be active in both evangelistic and social concerns.

Southern Baptists, with a strong theological commitment, have the spiritual resources to represent Christ faithfully in seeking to bring men to God through Jesus Christ and also in assisting the disadvantaged in their daily struggles. Concern for a person demands concern for all areas of life and all conditions that affect his well-being.

Apparently Southern Baptists have become more active in relating the Christian gospel to the total man during the past year than ever before. Also this past year, with the Crusade of the Americas a dominating emphasis, we have given extraordinary attention to evangelism. This year could well be our finest year in both evangelism and compassionate ministry.

The Convention has given responsibility to the Home Mission Board in both areas. The Board's program of evangelism development is charged with Convention-wide leadership in this central field. Evangelism development program leaders work with elected leaders in the respective state conventions in planning a nationwide evangelistic thrust. Convention-wide leadership in the Crusade of the Americas was provided by the Board through its evangelism staff. The crusade telecasts were paid for by the Home Mission Board and produced by the Radio-Television Commission.

The Convention has made the Home Mission Board responsible also for certain programs that deal directly with some of the pressing public issues of our day. The programs of language missions and of work with National Baptists relate to over twenty million Negroes and over thirty million persons identified with one of 17 major ethnic or cultural minorities. The program of Christian social ministries serves in ghettos of human need and among persons of varied situations. It ministers through Baptist centers, rescue missions, a home for unwed mothers, migrant missions, literacy missions, youth and family services and varied inner-city ministries.

All three of these programs are thoroughly evangelistic. The Home Mission Board's current report to the Convention reflects a total of 24,839 professions of faith through these programs in 1968. Of these, 323 missionaries in Christian social ministries reported 15,548 professions of Christian faith. In addition, Southern Baptist chaplains, related to the denomination through the Home Mission Board, reported approximately 12,000 professions of faith. Evangelism and social ministries are thus the opposite sides of the coin of genuine Christian love and witness, with concern for spiritual values dominant. Hopefully Southern Baptists are moving into our greatest years of evangelism, as we add a vastly increased witness by loving deed to our continuing witness by faithful word. ■



Photos by Don Rutledge

Our nation is enveloped in a social and cultural revolution. We are shocked by the potential for anarchy in a land dedicated to democracy and freedom. There are ominous sounds of hate and violence among men and of unbelief and rebellion toward God. These compel Christians to face the social situation and to examine themselves under the judgment of God. We are an affluent society, abounding in wealth and luxury.

Yet far too many of our people suffer from poverty. Many are hurt by circumstances from which they find it most difficult to escape, injustice which they find most difficult to correct, or heartless exploitation which they find most difficult to resist. Many live in slum housing or ghettos of race or poverty or ignorance or bitterness that often generate both despair and defiance. We are a nation that declares the sovereignty of law and the ne-

cessity of civil order. Yet, we have had riots, and have tolerated conditions that breed riots, spread violence, foster disrespect for the law and undermine the democratic process. We are a nation that declares the equality and rights of persons irrespective of race. Yet, as a nation, we have allowed cultural patterns to persist that have deprived millions of black Americans and other racial groups as well, of

quality of recognition and opportunity in the areas of education, employment, citizenship, housing and worship. Worse still, as a nation, we have condoned prejudices that have damaged the personhood of blacks and whites alike. We have seen a climate of racism and actionism develop, resulting in stilted, injustice, suspicion, faction, strife and alarming potential for bitterness, division, destruction and death.

ONE YEAR LATER

WE FACE A CRISIS

A STATEMENT CONCERNING
THE CRISIS IN THE NATION:

(Approved by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 1968)



WE REVIEW OUR EFFORTS

In the face of national shortcomings, we must nevertheless express appreciation for men of goodwill of all races and classes who have worked tirelessly and faithfully to create a Christian climate in our nation.

From the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention and indeed in organized Baptist life, we have affirmed God's love for all men of all continents and colors, of all regions and races. We have continued to proclaim that the death of Jesus on Calvary's cross is the instrument of God's miraculous redemption for every individual.

Inadequately, but sincerely, we have sought in our nation and around the world both to proclaim the gospel to the lost and to minister to human need in Christ's name. Individually and collectively, we are trying to serve, but we have yet to use our full resources to proclaim the gospel whereby all things are made new in Christ.

WE VOICE OUR CONFESSION

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

The current crisis arouses the Christian conscience. Judgment begins at the house of God. Christians are inescapably involved in the life of the nation. Along with all other citizens we recognize our share of responsibility for creating in our land conditions in which justice, order and righteousness can prevail. May God forgive us wherein we have failed him and our fellowman.

As Southern Baptists, representative of one of the largest bodies of Christians in our nation and claiming special ties of spiritual unity with the large conventions of Negro Baptists in our land, we have come far short of our privilege in Christian brotherhood.

Humbling ourselves before God, we implore him to create in us a right spirit of repentance and to



make us instruments of his redemption, his righteousness, his peace and his love toward all men.

WE DECLARE OUR COMMITMENT

The Christ we serve, the opportunity we face and the crisis we confront compel us to action. We therefore declare our commitment, believing this to be right in the sight of God and our duty under the lordship of Christ.

We will respect every individual as a person possessing inherent dignity and worth growing out of his creation in the image of God.

We will strive to obtain and secure for every person equality of human and legal rights. We will undertake to secure opportunities in matters of citizenship, public services, education, employment and personal habitation that every man achieve his highest potential as a person.

We will accept and exercise our civic responsibility as Christians to defend people against injustice. We will strive to insure for all persons the full opportunity for achievement according to the endowments given by God.

We will refuse to be a party to any movement that fosters racism or violence or mob action.

We will personally accept every Christian as a brother beloved in the Lord and welcome to the fellowship of faith and worship every person irrespective of race or class.

We will strive by personal initiative and every appropriate means of communication to bridge divisive barriers, to work for reconciliation and to open channels of fellowship and cooperation.

We will strive to become well informed about public issues, social ills and divisive moments that are damaging to human relationships. We will strive to resist prejudice and to combat forces that breed distrust and hostility.

We will recognize our involvement with other Christians and with all others of goodwill in the obligation to work for righteousness in public life and justice for all persons. We will strive to promote Christian brotherhood as a witness to the gospel of Christ.

continued

HOME MISSIONS



WE MAKE AN APPEAL

Our nation is at the crossroads. We must decide whether we shall be united in goodwill, freedom and justice under God to serve mankind or be destroyed by covetousness, passion, hate and strife.

We urge all leaders and supporters of minority groups to encourage their followers to exercise Christian concern and respect for the person and property of others and to manifest the responsible action commensurate with individual dignity and Christian citizenship.

We appeal to our fellow Southern

Baptists to join us in self-examination under the Spirit of God and to accept the present crisis as a challenge from God to strive for reconciliation by love.

We appeal to our fellow Southern Baptists to engage in Christian ventures in human relationships, and to take courageous actions for justice and peace.

We believe that a vigorous Christian response to this national crisis is imperative for an effective witness on our part at home and abroad.

Words will not suffice. The time has come for action. Our hope for

healing and renewal is in the redemption of the whole of life. Let us call men to faith in Christ. Let us dare to accept the full demands of the love and lordship of Christ in human relationships and urgent ministry. Let us be identified with Christ in the reproach and suffering of the cross.

We therefore recommend to the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention that:

1. We approve this statement on the national crisis.
2. We rededicate ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel which includes redemption of the individual and his

involvement in the social issues of our day.

3. We request the Home Mission Board to take the leadership in working with the Convention agencies concerned with the problems related to this crisis in the most effective manner possible and in keeping with their program assignments.

4. We call upon individuals, the churches, the associations and the state conventions to join the Southern Baptist Convention in a renewal of Christian effort to meet the national crisis. ■



BE YE RECONCILED . . .

The following statement was prepared by the executive secretary at the request of a special committee on the crisis in our nation in order to clarify further the Christian basis of the present concern:

The Bible speaks clearly of every person's need of a right relationship with God. Christ died for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God . . ." (1 Pet. 3:18). The Apostle Paul urged: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20b).

The Scriptures speak also of the right relationships with our fellowmen. Jesus taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves. He set the example, loving even his enemies. He commended the good Samaritan for his mercy to a stranger in need.

As Southern Baptists we have an exceptional record in evangelistic activity. This we must maintain. But in troubled times like these we must show greater concern than ever before for the needs of our fellowmen and for the problems of our society. We must be concerned about our fellowmen in both their spiritual and their physical needs.

Jesus taught his disciples that they are to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13, 14). The Apostle James pointed out that it is not enough to say to a naked or hungry person, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," without providing help (James 2:15, 16). We cannot, therefore, sit by unmoved in the face of widespread human suffering and death, hunger and discrimination, frustration and alienation, anger and hostility.

We can pray. We can yield our lives more fully to the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. We can seek ways by which to help correct the distresses of our day. We can show the sincerity of our concern for the souls of men by helping right the injustices that blight the daily lives, as well as the souls, of men. We can demonstrate love by action. We can demonstrate faith by works. This we must do, if we are to be true to Christ our Lord, and further his cause in our land and around the world.

This is something of the background to the commitment made by thousands of Southern Baptists in the 1968 Convention in Houston. ■

Grappling with the Soul of America

Just what is the Home Mission Board trying to do? Where is the Home Mission Board going? What are the objectives of the Home Mission Board?

These are some of the questions being asked throughout our Convention since the adoption of the crisis statement by the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in 1968. The Home Mission Board was specifically mentioned in Recommendation No. 3 of the original crisis statement (see page 6).

The Home Mission Board is determined to press forward on every front with its traditional emphasis on evangelism and missions, plus meaningful involvement and application of the gospel message to every area of modern life. The Home Mission Board will continue its emphasis on individual personal redemption in Christ, but also will continue to broaden the Southern Baptist witness through relevant ministry to the total man and to all men in the name of Christ.

Following the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston last June, Arthur Rutledge, executive secretary of the Home Mission Board, called a meeting in Atlanta of the heads of the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention to discuss the implementation of the crisis statement. Extensive discussion of the crisis statement continued at the Southern Baptist Convention communications conference last fall and at the Inter-Agency Council in January, both meetings in Nashville. The Home Mission Board has been mindful of the specific direction from the Southern Baptist Convention that it "take the leadership in working with the Convention agencies . . . in the most effective manner possible and in keeping with their program assignments." The Home Mission Board has been careful to respect the autonomy of each of the agencies and institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention and has interpreted its role primarily as that of convener in regard to these inter-agency meetings.

In August 1968, the directors of the Home Mission Board met in Atlanta and formally accepted the assignment given to them by the Southern Baptist

Convention regarding the crisis in the nation. As a means of carrying out this assignment, the directors of the Home Mission Board created a special coordinating and steering committee to study the crisis statement regarding its implementation. This committee has met formerly on five occasions, including two two-day meetings. Several members of the committee also attended the meeting of the heads of the Southern Baptist agencies in Nashville in September. The committee also met with the Department of Work With National Baptists in a listening session in Atlanta with some outstanding Negro religious leaders in February.

The committee has asked for and received suggestions from the Home Mission Board's staff personnel, as well as members of the board of directors. All suggestions and ideas were considered carefully by the committee and were reflected in its report to the directors of the Home Mission Board in its March meeting.

It is the position of the committee that evangelism and social concerns are complementary, not incompatible, in the light of the gospel. We are committed to individual personal redemption in Christ, and we cannot neglect the other side, for the second commandment is to "Love thy neighbor." The gospel of individual personal redemption is the gospel of social responsibility and involvement. There is no either/or; it is the whole gospel for the total man and for all men under the Lordship of Christ.

The committee feels that the adoption of the crisis statement by the SBC in Houston was a progressive and forward-reaching step. It has resulted in increased attention by the Home Mission Board and other SBC agencies to the crises in our nation, and has brought about a direct confrontation with the issues involved.

After its first meeting the special crisis statement committee requested Rutledge to formulate a preamble to the crisis statement in order to clarify the biblical basis for the statement itself, as well as our overall concern for human rights and dignity. This pre-

amble appears on page 11. It is hoped that this preamble will contribute to a better understanding of the purpose and intent of the crisis statement.

It should be made clear that it is a false dichotomy which distinguishes between personal redemption on the one hand and human responsibility on the other. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ we must minister to the whole man in the light of whatever his needs.

Most of us are aware that we are grappling with the very soul of America. We have a long way to go in human relations. There is much to be done. No easy remedy or magical panaceas are forthcoming. Nothing less than our total response to the demands of Christian faith and action commensurate with the real dimensions of the problems will suffice.

There are many things that have been accomplished because of the crisis statement that probably would not have been otherwise. In general a new climate of openness has been generated and a fresh spirit of interest has been felt. The mass media have publicized the action of the Houston Convention resulting in a new image of denominational responsibility and exposure of the pressing problems of our society. Southern Baptists are now acknowledged to be involved with the crucial matters described in the crisis statement.

Within the Home Mission Board itself quite a number of things have occurred since the crisis statement and, at least in part, as a result of its adoption. Staff and interdepartmental planning meetings have been conducted which were designed specifically to implement the crisis statement. There has been an assignment and reassignment of personnel and budgeting to meet the crisis in such places as Watts, Harlem, Washington, D.C. and others. Some of the program planning of various departments of the Home Mission Board has been redirected to allow more adequate implementation of the crisis statement.

Last summer 22 student summer missionaries were appointed by the Home

Mission Board in the Watts area of Los Angeles, resulting in 6,000 pupils enrolled in 80 Vacation Bible Schools with over 500 professions of faith. There has been an increase in interracial evangelistic efforts, as well as an increase in US-2 appointments, especially in ghetto areas.

There has been a meeting of Rural-Urban missionaries at Ridgecrest with special emphasis on the crisis statement.

There have been several conferences conducted dealing with the crisis statement and seeking ways and means of improving human relations. A survey of racial representation of Southern Baptist church membership has been completed, and a compilation of an inventory of what currently is being done by Southern Baptist Convention agencies in the areas referred to in the crisis statement is now being completed.

Many state conventions in their fall annual meetings adopted the crisis statement or similar statements. Speakers from other ethnic groups have been increasingly seen on programs of state conventions, pastors' conferences, student assemblies, evangelistic conferences, etc. Interracial employment at the faculty level has been begun by our seminaries and colleges.

In response to the Convention action the Home Mission Board administration has taken the lead in working with representatives of other agencies in the holding of three conferences regarding the involvements of the respective agencies in seeking to respond to the national crisis. These have provided opportunities for a stimulating exchange of information regarding activities and plans.

We are pleased to observe that most Southern Baptist Convention agencies have taken some significant forward steps as a response, at least in part, to the Convention's statement on the national crisis. These actions include curricular materials, especially by the Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood; and articles in various agency publications, as well as state papers.

Conferences have dealt realistically with various critical areas, such as re-

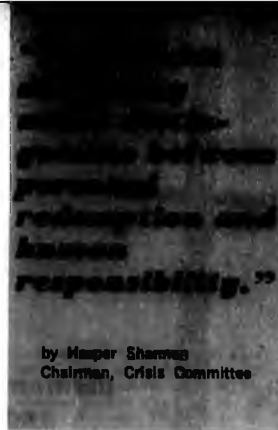
cent conferences on seminary campuses and elsewhere and those scheduled by the Christian Life Commission and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood emphasis on "mission action," in cooperation with the Home Mission Board, has provided wholesome impetus to the involvement of church members in ministering to disadvantaged persons.

The influence of the agencies has been felt in state conventions and district associations, some of which have taken progressive steps in seeking to apply Christian principles to contemporary problems. It is hoped that opportunities to discuss these concerns with representatives of other Baptist bodies may be found, such as in the North Baptist Fellowship of the B. W. A. and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The directors of the Home Mission Board in its meeting in Atlanta in March approved the recommendation of its special crisis committee to produce a documentary motion picture concerning the crisis in our nation which would be available for wide distribution. The directors also approved recommendations to give emphasis to the crisis situation through an issue of the *Home Missions* magazine and through the Home Mission Board booth at the Convention in New Orleans.

The directors authorized the compilation of bibliographical materials dealing with crisis situations, these lists to be distributed to such publications as *The Baptist Program*, *The Baptist Men's Journal*, *Woman's Missionary Union* reading lists and seminary publications.

A recommendation was approved suggesting that qualified professors in our Southern Baptist seminaries be encouraged to engage in necessary research and writings to produce new books dealing with the Christian responsibilities in social action. Such would be inclusive of the biblical basis, theological concepts and workable philosophies underlying such responsibilities. The Home Mission Board presently is assisting two seminary professors in such projects in connection with sabbatical leaves. In the



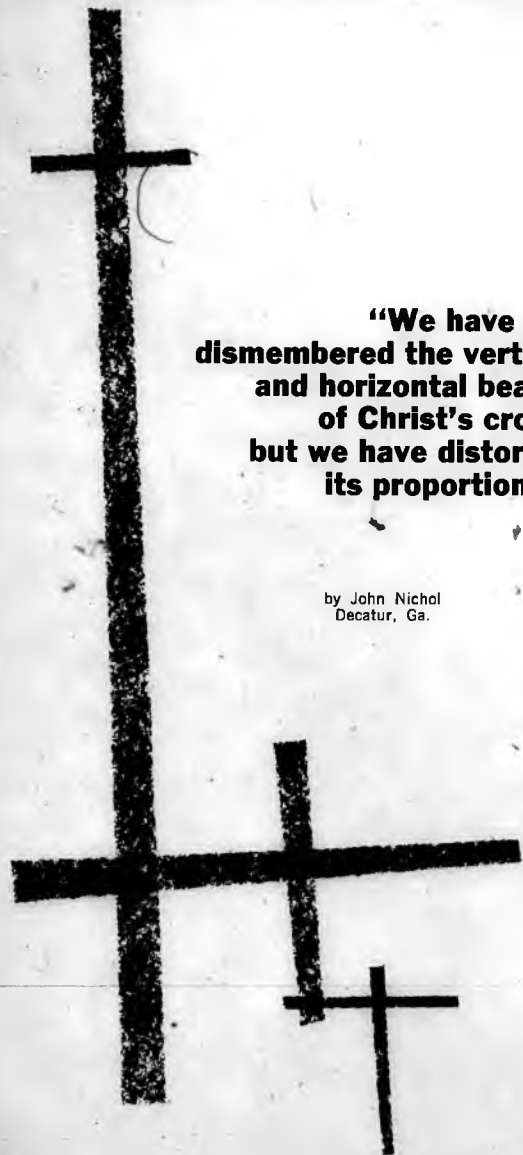
by Hanger Shames
Chairman, Crisis Committee

recent past it has provided similar assistance to two other professors as well as to one student in connection with a doctoral thesis in this area of concern.

The Home Mission Board recommends that local churches and associations be encouraged to deal with the problems reflected in the crisis statement by finding areas of common interest with various racial and minority groups in which we can work together and talk as we work. The real implementation of the crisis statement on the local level is dependent to a large degree on our ability to discover projects in which we can work together.

Perhaps one of the most significant actions taken by the Home Mission Board was its decision to participate through grants to trainees in the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission located in Chicago. This particular program will enable qualified personnel and students to receive firsthand training experience in dealing with the problems in the large urban and ghetto areas. As this program demonstrates its value, the possibility will present itself in the future for a more active participation by the Home Mission Board in the work of this training center.

The Home Mission Board intends to continue giving major attention to alleviating the crises in our nation. There is indeed a long way to go, and there is much more to be done. Nevertheless we are encouraged and we feel that the magnitude of the task should not forego our beginnings no matter how meager. We must begin somewhere, and we must continue our efforts in the area of human relations certainly throughout this century and the foreseeable future. ■



**"We have not
dismembered the vertical
and horizontal beams
of Christ's cross,
but we have distorted
its proportions."**

by John Nichol
Decatur, Ga.

Jesus, the Secular Pietist

Should the church of Jesus Christ seek only to change men's hearts and trust that they will live in such a way as to change society, or should the church use its influence and resources to change those political, social and economic structures in America which condemn large numbers of men and women to poverty, ignorance and disease, generation after generation?

This is the question which threatens to rend the fabric of our denomination. It is the issue which concerns and divides congregations all across our land without regard to denomination. Should the church make its presence felt in the public forum where a great segment of our society struggles for a place to live, a job, an education, the right to vote and justice in our courts? Are these legitimate concerns for the church of Jesus Christ, or is our business evangelism and the saving of souls?

I used to think our answer to the question was a rather emphatic "No! The mission of the church is evangelism!" However, more recently I have come to see that through a strange segregation of social concern we have managed to answer this question both yes and no, depending on the issues at stake.

I remember attending a pastor's conference immediately following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., when the question of sending a message of condolence to the King family was debated rather hotly, especially when it was suggested that perhaps we should confess our own complicity in his death because of the thunderous silence of our pulpits in the South on the question of racial justice. Because I spoke in favor of such a message, I was accosted following the meeting by a fellow pastor who informed me in no uncertain terms that, "Jesus didn't lead any marches, demonstrations, or sit-ins when he was on earth. He concentrated on saving souls. Our business is to preach the gospel and then when men

are saved these other problems will solve themselves." As I understand it, he was telling me that the answer to injustice, poverty and racism is evangelism.

Several weeks ago I attended a special called meeting of Baptist pastors in my area to consider what course of action might be taken in the face of a proposal to open our county to the sale of unrefrigerated beer and wine. I noticed the same ministerial colleague sitting front and center, evincing great interest in the strategy being planned at that meeting. Several suggestions were made as to how we might unite our efforts in a strong protest against the proposal.

Each pastor was asked to write a letter to the city commissioners and encourage his church members to do likewise. A mass protest was planned for the commission meeting when the matter was to be discussed. A plan was mapped out carefully to include as speakers opposing this measure both a respected retired member of our ministerial fellowship and a younger minister as well. It was suggested that we also try to enlist as part of the opposition, and as spokesmen, both a Christian physician and a Christian lawyer. A letter which came to my desk after that meeting expressed the hope that when the meeting date came we might have as many as 1,000 Epistola present to dramatize our opposition to this proposal. Everyone seemed to agree that when the church faces social problems of this magnitude, we ought to "stand up and be counted" on the side of truth.

Now I see more clearly the lesson which previously had escaped me. We have selected with great care the sins we have opposed, much like a young woman exercises caution in choosing a prospective husband. As a consequence, we have arrived at a strange position. Issues like drinking, gambling, church and state, pornography and narcotics should be dealt with through legislation

and social pressure. On the other hand, issues like poverty, racism and injustice should be solved through evangelism. If we have community consensus within the church, it's safe to oppose a problem; but if the problem challenges the standards by which our people live, the only answer is evangelism. The same man who trusts God to cure the racist alone undertakes to help him with the alcoholic! I would suggest that God expects us to accept a full measure of Christian responsibility for both men.

This kind of duplicity and inconsistency is making our witness vacuous and earning for the church the contempt of the very people we are supposed to serve. Somehow we must work our way through the tension between evangelism and social action to a solution and posture which incorporates the biblical content of both emphases. As Clyde Fant Jr. has reminded us in an article in the March issue of *Home Missions*, "It now appears to be without question the question of our time."

This is a complex matter and we may well discover that the simplistic answers we have given in the past are in need of some careful reevaluation. God has placed no premium on consecrated ignorance. He seeks our heads as well as our hearts. It is not enough to say, "Jesus led no marches," and "Paul didn't do anything about slavery or the way women were treated."

In his book *What in the World?* Colin Williams wisely points out that the reason "the New Testament concentrates attention on the personal, to the apparent exclusion of the structures of social life, is that Christ's call for obedience comes to us at the points of our responsibility." He means, of course, that God holds a Christian responsible for doing what he is in a position to do. In New Testament times, members of the Christian community were a decided minority, of ordinary men and women, "not many wise or powerful or of high

social status." They were not in a position of power where they could influence decisions relative to major social structures such as slavery or the subjugation of women. They had no vote, could run for no office.

However, as we read the New Testament, we learn how responsibly they used the measure of freedom and power which they did have. In their own little fellowships they revealed the power of Christ to break down barriers between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female. In fact, they used their freedom so well that the political and social consequences suggested by their actions aroused deep fears in the minds of politicians, emperors and business leaders.

Because the situation in which the church exists in America today is so far different from that of the first century, it is a mistake to make the life of the early church normative for our life today at this point. In the average county seat town in the South today, those persons professing faith in Jesus Christ constitute a majority of the population. On any given Sunday morning the power structure of the entire community is present in the services of our Protestant churches. Christians are in power, not under power, and as a consequence, they shall be expected by God to use that power to alleviate injustice, oppression and human suffering.

This is not to suggest that the church should be expected to offer solutions to the multiplicity of problems which characterize our urban, secular, technological society. There are many areas in which the church is not equipped to act intellectually, but as Leslie Weatherhead has pointed out, we can never be excused for failing to act morally. We are supposed to be the "good guys who wear the white hats" and the world ought not to have to wonder which side we are on. Although we cannot provide

continued

Jesus, the Secular Pietist

continued from page 15



a map, we can and should provide a compass. We can enunciate principles by which society should function even when we cannot offer blueprints. J. S. Whale is right when he says "any present-day theology which has not a revolutionary sociology as part of its implicit logic is not truly Christian."

It is both instructive and humbling to reflect on how we have arrived at our present position, which manifests such a strong aversion to the articulation of the social dimensions of the gospel.

There is a rather popular license plate displayed on the front bumper of automobiles throughout the South which suggests that "if your heart's not in Dixie" you ought to get out. "Love it or leave it" is the substance of the idea, and it is, of course, assumed that those who love it will not criticize it, or try to reform it in any way. This license plate perfectly expresses the effort which has been made (an effort with which our churches have cooperated) to create a closed society, made up of people with closed minds. In such a society, men do not question the status quo, for there is no room for dissent or deviation from the norm. In a closed society, men do not hear God's word of judgment on things as they are and commit themselves to making things as they ought to be; instead, they emasculate and domesticate the gospel until it no longer challenges the existing patterns of society.

The truth is that in many instances we have not gone honestly to the Scripture with hearts open to hear God's judgment upon our standards. Instead, we have gone to the gospel in search of some defense for the perpetuation of the patterns we already have established. In this process, we have refused to be shaped by God, and have instead made

God after our image, thus providing divine sanction for the oppression and exploitation which characterizes our society. Our gospel becomes ethic-less when it is bereft of the rigorous virtues of truth and justice and reduced to a sentimental, individualistic, private affair between man and God.

The Church's commitment to culture is reflected in a quotation from William Warren Sweet's *Story of Religion in America*: "Parties in the churches for and against slavery did not begin to form until cotton-growing had developed into a vast industry. It was not until church members had become wealthy cotton growers that the churches ceased to denounce the institution. At the adoption of the Constitution, all the churches were unanimous in their opposition to slavery; by the opening of the Civil War the churches had become a bulwark of American slavery."

As a later chapter in this glorious story, Grier and Cobbs in *Black Rage* point out that it was not until cotton no longer was king and industrialization was on the rise that there arose again a national repugnance for slavery.

One of the great dangers in the present controversy within our churches between the advocates of evangelism and the advocates of social action is a polarization in which each side tends to mistake its arc for the whole circle. The evangelicals need to hear it said that the preaching of the Word without the performance of the deed is irrelevant piety, for which there is a dwindling audience in our world. At the same time, social action advocates need to be reminded that the performance of the deed without the proclamation of the Word is mere humanism which lacks the power to heal the whole man.

The German philosopher Hegel maintained that every affirmation (thesis) evokes its natural opposite (antithesis), and that history moves forward when these two result in a unified whole (synthesis). Rather than putting the advocates of evangelism over against those who are concerned with social action,

we must seek a biblically-oriented synthesis.

In *The Secular Congregation* Robert Raines suggests that the two poles in the present controversy may be labeled and identified as the pietists and the secularists, and describes the characteristics of each as follows.

The pietist tends to be a church-centered man who looks for God primarily in the church through its worship and fellowship together. He would emphasize the first great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and seeks more to maintain the essential faith than to be relevant to the modern world. He is willing to run the risk of losing the world in order to hold fast to the church.

In contrast, the secularist is a world-centered man who seeks God primarily in the events of history and in his relationships with other men. He tends to emphasize the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and is more concerned with the gospel's relevance to the world than with its preservation. He is willing to risk losing the church in order to hold on to the world and its need.

The pietist tends to think of God's action primarily in terms of the past and he seeks continuity, while the secularist thinks of God's action primarily in terms of the future and he wants change.

The mood of the pietist is nostalgia and his motto is "Come weal or woe, the status quo." The mood of the secularist is optimism and his motto is, "Come weal or woe, go, go, go!"

The pietist thinks of sin primarily in terms of private immorality—lying, stealing, adultery—and of salvation in individualistic terms.

The secularist thinks of sin in terms of public immorality—injustice, prejudice, oppression—and thinks of salvation in corporate terms when the nations will stand before God.

Both the pietist and secularist want law and order, but if forced to choose, the pietist will take order, for he explores civil disobedience, and the secularist will take justice, because he abhors unjust laws.

The pietist prays, "Lord, change me!" The secularist, "Lord, change the world."

Now, we have noticed that the pietist and the secularist emphasize different

aspects of Mark 12:28-34. And since Jesus gave us two commandments and not one, either position is deficient in the sight of God. The synthesis we seek is a secular piety—that is, an expression of Christian discipleship which is deeply rooted in God's redemptive grace, and, as a consequence, deeply committed to the service of the world Christ died to redeem. Stephen Rose has referred to this same synthesis as a "social evangelism." It is, in short, a church which exercises both its priestly and its prophetic functions.

Christ does not offer us the luxury of choosing between the pietist and the secularist, but calls us to two distinct obligations—one vertical and one horizontal. Love of God is not the same as love for man, and love for man is not a substitute for love of God. These two commandments are not identical or interchangeable, but they are inseparable.

As we already have noted, we have not been devoid of social concern in our churches, but we have been highly selective in choosing our issues. We have not dismembered the vertical and horizontal beams of Christ's cross, but we have distorted its proportions. The cross as we have viewed it in our pietistic tradition looks like this:



while the secularist's cross is equally disproportionate, looking like this:



The secular pietist maintains the vertical beam of divine grace and consequent devotion to God in proper proportion to the horizontal

missions are in power, not under. They shall be expected by to use that power to alleviate

beam of human obedience and loving service to man. And thus it is that he alone honors the cross in the truest sense, by holding both dimensions in such radical esteem.

Karl Barth points out the necessity and uniqueness of man's personal commitment to God: "The fact that the source must and does become a river does not mean that the source is not something true and distinctive as opposed to the river. Indeed, without this true and distinctive thing which we call the source, there could no river."

On the other hand, James Stewart warns against an introverted pietistic faith which lacks the dimension of social concern: "You are right to dwell in the secret place of the Most High. You are right to walk with God as Pilgrims and sojourners here, looking beyond this transitory scene to the bliss of life eternal. You are right to believe that to God alone belong the Kingdom, the power and the glory. But you are wrong to lock yourself up in that secret place of devotion. You are wrong to reduce religion to an unethical, sentimental irrelevance. You are wrong if, in the presence of social misery and injustice, you do not see Christ's eyes blazing like a flame of fire, nor hear his voice, like a trumpet, crying, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice!'"

If our faith is to be true to Christ, these two commitments must coalesce in a concern nourished by the love of God for all that limits and warps and hinders the life of man. Barth has rightly pointed out that the source precedes the river, and it is not by accident that the first great commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. Here is our love for God, love for man finds its source. We give visibility and meaning to our love for God through our love for man. We see this same priority expressed in the decalogue (Ten Commandments), where commandments 1-4 deal with man's relationships to God, and 5-10 with man's relationship with man. As John McKay put it, "It is the business of the church to create the creators of the new social order."

The mistake the pietist makes is the assumption that he can cultivate a kind of intimate love affair between himself and God, "saving his own soul" while he lets the rest of the world go by. In contrast, we learn from Jesus our

noblest lessons in prayer, while at the same time we see the highest expression of compassion for human need. The latter was nourished in the former.

The substitution of piety for servanthood in our churches has turned thousands of dedicated Christian young people away from the church, and thrust them into VISTA, O.E.O. and the Peace Corps in search of integrity. These young people have been perceptive enough to see that a religion centered in the Christ who came down to earth ought to be down to earth in its concern for all that affects the lives of men—that devotion to God, if healthy, must find expression in the sacrificial service of men.

On the other hand, the secularist, bent on redeeming society, often-times mistakenly assumes that there is no need in his life for the rigors of a self-denying devotion to God. Instead he plunges headlong into programs to alter man's social, economic and political situation. He wants the fruit of the Christian experience apart from its roots. He forgets that though it is accurate to describe Jesus as "the man for others," He is distinguished as well by the fact that He is preeminently "the man for God." He forgets as well that our love for man is never more genuine and more constant than when it springs from the love of God. Only a concern for man which is rooted in that love will possess the endurance, imagination and courage needed to persist when, in the service of others, our own well-being is threatened.

Ernest Campbell gives us a needed warning when he stresses the fact that there are worse things than poverty or segregation or illness or living with injustice. Life's greatest tragedy, he points out, is to live and die unmindful of what God has done for us in Christ. It is true we have not started as Christians until we begin to care about a man's physical needs. But it is equally true to say we have not finished until men know and accept the truth of God's love.

continued on page 16

"That which we seek, if true to Christ, is a secular piety, a life of service to man which flows from a life of love of God."

The Gospel of Reconciliation

by Chevis Horne
Martinsville, Va.

Tension, conflict and divisiveness are among the identifying marks of our time. Men who think in terms of reconciliation and peace often are discouraged. I see people who say they were once idealists but no longer are. Their idealism has been dashed to pieces upon the hard stones of reality. A kind of realism, even despair and cynicism, has replaced their idealism of other years. Our world is a hard place for idealists. Yet, the Christian never can yield to cynicism and despair. While not being a starry-eyed idealist, he must never lose hope for a better world. Indeed he cannot since reconciliation is central in the Christian gospel.

Reconciliation is at the heart of our gospel. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5:14) this is the great and hopeful reality that lies dead center in our faith. There are other truths but they all lie beyond center. Every other truth lies somewhere between center and circumference.

Because God was in Christ acting graciously and savingly, man, estranged and far from God, can be reconciled to God. And God was in Christ reconciling man to his brother. "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). It is this truth of reconciliation that makes the gospel good news.

The church which has a gospel of reconciliation is sent on a mission of reconciliation. Indeed, this is its main task. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation and has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us, we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

In some real sense the church is to take Christ's place. It is in Christ's stead, on behalf of Christ that the church must perform its mission of reconciliation. The church must wear the shoes of Christ. It must tramp through this world in the sandals of its Lord. This means it must be shod with the gospel of reconciliation. Unless it is

willing to be, it cannot fulfill the mission on which God has sent it.

Being sent on a mission of reconciliation, the church must be essentially a peacemaker rather than a peacekeeper. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9).

All too frequently, the church has seen its role as peacekeeper rather than peacemaker. We have tried to keep quiet waters still rather than bring peace to troubled and stormy seas. Often in the classroom, from behind the pulpit and in the larger fellowship, we carefully have skirted vital issues which are controversial yet demand the best thought and energy of our time. We have talked about nice, sweet and inoffensive things. We have often taught

"All too frequently the church has seen its role as peacekeeper rather than peacemaker."

and preached the gospel in spiritually abstract terms, far removed and unrelated to vital and living areas of concern. Theology preached abstractly is rarely offensive to laymen and becomes less offensive to preachers all the while. It is as theology is related to controversial and social areas that it becomes offensive. We should remember Jesus in relation to this problem. His earliest controversies centered around social propriety in accepting and eating with publicans and sinners and in ignoring Sabbath laws. But it should be remembered that he violated the Sabbath in using it to meet human and social needs. Who can ever forget his famous dictum "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)?

The church often has not had the courage of its Lord. We have played it safe. We have been determined to keep the peace of the church at any price. We have been afraid of alienating substantial contributors. We have been more concerned with keeping thriving institutions than being redemptive fellowships that take the risk of reconciliation and serious involvement.

Yet, God has called us to be peacemakers rather than peacekeepers. If we are to be peacemakers we have to go where there isn't reconciliation. We have to go where there is estrangement, where men are separated from God and from each other—places where God sends his church on its mission of reconciliation.

The church that survives with power and relevance will do so upon the high and stormy seas. It will listen to the hard and agonizing questions our world is asking. It will identify with the pain and loneliness of men. It will go into the ghettos of despair with its message of hope. It will preach faithfully its gospel of God's grace and courageously live its gospel of love. It will forsake its sheltered life and go into areas of tension and conflict. It will take seriously its mission of reconciliation. Unless it is willing to do that it must become like an obsolete ship, taken from the high seas, put in mothballs and docked in some quiet and sheltered harbor.

Secular voices that speak of reconciliation. Ours is a time when secular voices speak of reconciliation. They speak not so much from idealism as from a stern and unrelenting necessity. Hard, tough reality calls for such talk. These voices should help call the church to its main task.

Hear a modern parable. There were two feuding mountain families. For generations they had fought. But a valley divided them and was a kind of natural barrier between them in their hostility and enmity. Then a fateful thing happened. They moved down into the valley and built their houses there. They exchanged their muzzle-loading shotguns for high powered automatic rifles. The physical barriers of the valley now removed and being armed with more powerful weapons than ever before, they threatened each other more than ever. With the greater threat they experienced a heightened anxiety. And with the heightened anxiety, they were more tempted than ever with irrational and destructive behavior. The threat of impending tragedy was a hard fact with which they had to reckon. So they said to themselves: "Let us stop being feuding mountain families and become

brothers of the valley. That is the only way we can live." So there was talk of reconciliation up and down that valley.

Those feuding mountain families represent our modern world. The barriers of distance and time have almost been removed. We live close together and we are armed with weapons more deadly and destructive than we have ever known before. Our proximity and power pose a greater threat. With the greater threat comes heightened anxiety. And with the heightened anxiety comes the possibility of the most irrational and destructive behavior history has ever known. The fact we are better educated and more sophisticated than any generation gives us little hope within itself when we remember that some of the most irrational behavior of our time occurred in Nazi Germany which was one of the most literate and best educated nations of our world. And modern psychology has destroyed the illusion of the prowess of reason in man. It has discovered that man's rational powers, rather than being master, are often servant of primitive and subconscious forces in his life. Intellectual achievement therefore is a poor restraint on his primitive drives under certain conditions. Modern man is being forced to talk seriously of reconciliation. He must work for those things that make for peace if he survives. Hard reality goads him.

The voice of our space age calls us to give up our narrow, provincial and prejudicial thinking. It calls for spacious thinking, broader sympathies and the reconciling spirit.

The lunar orbital flight of our astronauts during Christmas of 1968 opened up a new dimension of life for modern man. For the first time man went beyond the atmosphere and gravitational field of his earth. He is now cosmic man. Our astronauts, 240,000 miles from earth, saw our planet as a small speck in space. Frank Borman said he felt as if he were an ambassador from a small earth to the larger universe. From the vantage point of space he was not to be an American citizen but he had never before had national lines so little to him. And this was one of other lines and barriers that divide men. He wished he could have

announced to the universe that earth was reconciled, made whole and at peace. So far from earth he had thoughts of reconciliation.

Archibald MacLeish, reflecting on the experiences of our astronauts, wrote:

"To see earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers who know now that they are truly brothers."

I am afraid MacLeish is too optimistic. I don't believe we know that we are truly brothers. But we do know that we are riders on the earth together, a fact that, in our kind of world, should drive

"Members of the Ku Klux Klan are, often more acceptable than pastors who preach reconciliation."

us in search of peace and real brotherhood.

Voices from the social, economic and political areas of life call for reconciliation.

President Richard Nixon in his inaugural address said in part: "No man can be fully free while his neighbor is not. To go forward at all is to go forward together."

"This means black and white together, as one nation, not two. The laws have caught up with our consciences. What remains is to give life to what is in the law: to ensure at last that as all are born equal in dignity before God, all are born equal in dignity before man."

James Reston, famed news analyst, summarized President Nixon's address like this: "President Richard Nixon started his administration with a simple statement of priorities: peace abroad and reconciliation at home."

These voices that come from beyond the church should remind the church of its main task, sharpen its sense of mission and heighten its sense of urgency.

Reconciliation and race relations. Ra-

cial tensions are among the most threatening in our society. The church has a major responsibility here. As a part of its main mission, the church must help reconcile the Negro and the white man.

How does the church relate its gospel of reconciliation to race relations? How has the modern church responded to the demands of the racial situation? I see the church responding in three ways.

First, some churches react negatively. They refuse to fulfill their mission of reconciliation to the Negro and white man. Rather than being the answer to racial tension they are a part of the problem. They give shelter and protection to white supremacy. They are bastions of racial pride and bigotry where racists will make one of their last stands in fighting for patterns of segregated life.

In these churches members of the Ku Klux Klan are often more acceptable and more comfortable than pastors who preach the gospel of reconciliation in all of its dimensions. Indeed, pastors cannot preach the full gospel of reconciliation and keep their pulpits. There is a strict censorship of the pulpits and congregations can be ruthless and merciless in firing their pastors. And Klansmen are more acceptable than laymen who have a strong sense of racial and social justice.

Such reactionism throws a threatening shadow across the future of the institutional church. History long will remember and be slow to forgive the church which, refusing to fulfill its mission of reconciliation, actively aligns itself with forces of racial bigotry and injustice. Moreover, young men who are intellectually alert, spiritually sensitive and socially dedicated will not give their lives as ministers to the institutional church that perpetuates the iniquitous pattern of racial segregation. They may have a strong sense of calling to the gospel ministry, but they will fulfill it in a different role and in a different kind of institution. Young men who have completed their theological education and accepted pulpits are leaving the ministry for secular vocations at an alarming rate. Frequently, they are among our finest, most gifted and most

continued

The Gospel of Reconciliation

continued from page 19

dedicated men. They often become convinced that the church does not really believe and therefore will not practice its gospel of reconciliation.

If God cannot use the institutional church in his purpose of reconciliation in the world, will he spare the church any more than he did old Israel? The words of Paul are most sobering: "And if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you" (Rom. 11:21). Is it possible that God will raise up another people to whom he can say: "Once you were no people but now you are God's people."

Second, some churches respond with passivity and aloofness. They fulfill the role of peacekeepers. The peace and harmony of the church must be kept. This becomes the first responsibility. They shy away from controversial issues and refuse involvement that jeopardizes the interior life of the church. The position is one of detachment from racial tension.

This kind of church is at the mercy of powerful social, economic and political forces of the society. Rather than shaping its culture it is shaped by the culture. As social forces demand that the churches keep their doors closed to blacks, doors will be kept closed. But when social pressures demand that doors of the church be opened to the Negro, the doors will be opened. For example, businessmen in this kind of congregation whose businesses depend upon the Negro community for 25 percent to 50 percent of the gross income may feel at last that they cannot take an open stand against integration in their church. But rather than acting out of deep Christian conviction they acquiesce to powerful social and economic forces. This church therefore, rather than acting upon its society reacts to it. Rather than being true to its own integrity and sense of mission it allows the society in which it lives to call the signals. In its passivity and aloofness it becomes the clay while the culture becomes the potter.

Third, other churches respond with serious involvement. The interior peace of the church is not the first consideration. The first consideration of this kind of church is that of being true to its own integrity and to its mission of reconciliation. Its role is peacemaker, not peacekeeper. This church is willing to run the risks and take the chances of serious involvement in race relations. It knows that it cannot escape tension within its life but it understands that

tension, like growing pains, can be creative. One of the most hopeful things of our time is the increasing number of churches which are willing to show this kind of courage and relevance.

The church that becomes seriously involved in race relations will effect reconciliation in two areas: within its own life and within the larger society.

The church that takes seriously its ministry of reconciliation must begin with its own life. It must set its own house in order. It knows that Jesus Christ has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between the white man and Negro. It knows that out of the two races God has created a new humanity and that within the church the Negro and white man are one in Christ Jesus. In being true to its own nature and integrity it cannot keep racial barriers and have racial qualifications for membership. And to the extent it keeps its racial barriers just to that extent it fails to be the church of Jesus Christ. Reconciliation between the Negro and white

History will be slow to forgive the church which actively aligns itself with forces of injustice."

man must become a reality within the life of the church.

But the church must effect reconciliation between the two races in the larger society. It will support laws that make for justice, human dignity and racial equality. It will encourage movements and organizations of reconciliation that keep open channels of communication, span chasms and create goodwill and acceptance. Above all, it will send its members into the world conscious of their mission of reconciliation there.

While it must be confessed that the church as an institution has moved slowly in its ministry of reconciliation between the two races, it has sent into society men and women who are far ahead of the institutions to which they belong. If you ask them where they got their sense of racial and social justice they will in almost every case tell you they have gotten it from the gospel the church preaches.

While writing this article, I have talked with a young man in our church who works in industry. He told me about recently promoting a young Negro man to a supervisory position, not

because the law demanded it, but because the young man was capable and worthy. He carries into industry a sense of human dignity and justice which he gladly acknowledges comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ. He never misses an opportunity to create goodwill, foster understanding and mutual acceptance between the Negro and white man. He is on a mission of reconciliation in industry.

For several years our church provided facilities for a school for retarded children which was integrated. One snowy day only three little boys came to one of the classes. The teacher of that class kept her class roll at home and checked it each day after the school period was over. She said that on this particular day it was as she checked her class roll that she remembered that all three of those little boys who braved the snow were Negro. She had taught, worked and played with those boys all morning long without being conscious of the color of their skin. They were persons and that was all that really mattered. It is this kind of person the church must send into the world as reconciler.

I grew up in a society that prejudiced me against the Negro. I remember as a small boy my father's car getting stuck in the mud. The roads were poor and this was a common occurrence. It was a cold rainy winter night and my father and I could not free the car. My father went for help and returned with a Negro who brought his lantern and shovel. The Negro man got down in the mud and dug the car out. From a spontaneous childish heart I thanked him, calling him mister. No sooner had that word of address slipped from my lips than I knew I had broken a social propriety. I felt guilty and ashamed. My society had made my mind blacker with prejudice than any Negro's face I have ever seen. But I want to be rid of my racial prejudice. It is a luxury I cannot afford in my kind of world.

It is a luxury we have never been able to afford. We just thought we could. And now history presents us with an exorbitant bill of hostility, rioting, burning cities and one nation threatened to be torn into two. It always has been too costly. We just didn't know it.

An hour of crisis calls the church to its main task of reconciliation. How the church responds to that call more than anything else will determine the future of the institutional church. ■

by Sue Brooks

"I was converted actually through the reading of the Scripture, and I believe in the objective power of the Word of God," said Poland-born Elias L. Golonka, a language missions leader of the Home Mission Board.

And in times like these when Southern Baptists are battling about the so-called social gospel versus the evangelistic gospel, this "objective power" possibly could be the missing unifying link. More than a million copies of Scripture portions have been made available to homeland mission leaders in less than two years, and requests to cover increased distribution are handled daily, according to L.O. Griffith of the Division of Communication.

The mission agency's board of directors meeting in Atlanta recently approved an agreement with the American Bible Society to obtain Scriptures.

The American Bible Society—known internationally for innovative translations, illustrations and presentations of Scriptures—initiated the agreement after recognizing the unique outlets available to the denomination and the increased distribution.

In less than one week after the directors' approval, an unsolicited donation from a layman had underwritten the first order—10,000 copies of the *Good News for Modern Man* version of the New Testament—and in less than two weeks the first supply was exhausted.

"I am really thrilled over the potential that this has," Griffith said.

The denomination particularly realized the appeal of the modern translations in 1967 when Atlanta was a pilot project center for the distribution of *Good News for Modern Man*, translated by Southern Baptist Robert Bratcher. Griffith headed the citywide advisory committee for the successful project.

Texas Baptists last month received the largest single order of Bibles the Bible Society has ever filled when they bought 1,229,400 copies of *Good News for Modern Man* and another 153,700 New Testaments in Spanish.

Earlier this year, through the Department of Language Missions, 500,000 copies of the New Testament and Bibles in the Russian language were distributed.

Golonka said the Scriptures were distributed to Russian and Ukrainian pastors in the United States and Canada. "And it is our hope," he added, "that by distributing these Bibles in the United States and many countries abroad that somehow they will reach the people of Soviet Russia."

Golonka definitely feels that some of the Scriptures, "a priceless treasure in Russia," are reaching the mother Communist country.

He revealed also that there is a "new emphasis actually among the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches on the reading and studying of the Bible."

"Because of this emphasis, there is a definite interest, I know particularly among the Slavic people (Golonka's chief concern in the departmental breakdown of ministry to Spanish-speaking, Internationals, the deaf, et al).

"Instead of saying we are getting 'prospects,'" Golonka said, "let's say we 'make contact' with the people (it is difficult for me to use this word, 'prospect,' because it's not in the New Testament)."

"I believe that as the Scripture goes to people that it will help them to find Christ."

The Language Missions Department has a standing offer to provide a limited number of Bibles or New Testaments to any Southern Baptist church that extends its ministry on a regular basis, including Bible study, to language per-

sons. Thus far churches from 23 states (and three foreign countries) have requested the Scriptures through this "ABC offer."

Most often Scriptures are requested in Spanish, but requests have come for translations in Japanese, Italian, Chinese, French, Polish, German, Portuguese and basic English.

In addition to Bibles and Scripture portions, they also stock tracts, hymnals and doctrinal books in different languages.

In nationwide telecasts sponsored by Southern Baptists through July as a part of participation in the international Crusade of the Americas, more than 2,000 viewers requesting free material have received copies of the Gospel of John (*Good News for Modern Man* translation), in addition to other prepared materials.

Some of the letters revealed: "I want to hear more about the gospel of Jesus Christ."

One woman, after seeing the telecasts and receiving the Gospel selection wrote back: "I would like to thank you. Now we have regular devotional meetings at home."

"In all of these situations, we hope to open the door to get their ears enough (with the selected Scripture passage) so that they can go to the entire New Testament message afterwards," Griffith said.

This summer, according to Griffith, the denomination hopes to "get the ear" of ghetto residents in such strategic areas as New York and Worcester through distributing leaflets containing selected Scripture passages and illustrations.

"As Christians know, many of these Scripture selections were written particularly to the needs of these groups," Griffith said. ■



Photos by Don Rutledge

Glass with Evansville Young People
"An evangelist between gridiron seasons"

THE CRUSADE IN INDIANA:

Contagious Cooperation

by Al Shackelford

Can Southern Baptists cooperate with other Baptists or with other evangelical denominations in an evangelistic crusade—especially in an area where they are a distinct minority?

This question was faced in two Indiana areas and the answer would be "yes" from the cooperating churches and "yes" from the 1,140 individuals who made decisions during the week-long crusades in Indianapolis and Evansville.

And the event which encouraged Southern Baptists in a mission area to forsake an isolationist attitude is the current Crusade of the Americas.

The crusades in Indianapolis and Evansville were similar, and yet were different in the extent of cooperation with other groups.

Evansville faced a dilemma in their planning. A Southern Baptist planned and promoted city-wide crusade had been set for 1967 and was cancelled by the Southwestern Baptist Association less than 11 weeks before it was to begin.

Yet, there was still the desire to have a city-wide campaign and the Crusade of the Americas quickly revived this hope.

Bill Carter, pastor of Oakhill Baptist Church, Evansville, and southwest area missionary C.E. Wiley heard that Bill Glass was to hold an area crusade in Sturgis, Ky., in February 1968. Glass is a professional football player for the Cleveland Browns, a Southern Baptist and an evangelist between gridiron seasons.

Carter and Wiley met with Glass that month and discussed a possible crusade for Evansville. With the encouragement received, Southwestern Baptist Association voted to sponsor such a crusade.

However, on later contacts with Glass it was felt best to include all evangelicals in the campaign with no one body or ministerial group allowed to sponsor it. So, the association voted not to sponsor the crusade.

An independent corporation was organized in August 1968 to sponsor the Greater Evansville Crusade for Christ.

The inclusion of other faiths in the crusade sparked a mild controversy within the association. Some pastors felt it was not best for Southern Baptists to be involved in interdenominational evangelism. Some saw it as a violation of the Crusade of the Americas since it was not to be a "Baptist" thing.

However, by crusade time 40 of the

continued



Autrey and Andrews in Indianapolis
"A long way from the balcony to the pulpit"



Baylor Student Phil Driscoll in Evansville
Part of a team that drew 12,000

Contagious Cooperation

continued from page 23

association's 44 churches did participate officially. Members from the other four Southern Baptist churches did attend and many of these served as counselors or committeemen.

Wiley, who served as executive secretary for the crusade, said that approximately 100 churches from 20 different denominations actually cooperated in the crusade.

With this many churches involved, the Evansville campaign quickly grew into a major area function. Evansville Mayor Frank McDonald and U.S. Congressman Roger Zion agreed to be honorary cochairmen for the crusade. A \$35,000 budget was adopted. Roberts Stadium, a 12,000-seat coliseum that hosts the NCAA small college championships, was leased.

Among the extensive preparation was counselor training. Because of the large response, duplicate sessions were held on three consecutive nights each week for seven weeks. To qualify as a counselor, a person had to attend at least

four of the seven weekly sessions—and 1,400 did.

On Easter afternoon over 1,000 youths made a 12-mile march from the Youth for Christ headquarters to Roberts Stadium to publicize that night's opening service of the crusade.

Attendance at the eight services averaged about 8,000 with the largest crowd coming with 12,000 on the closing night.

Jimmie McDonald, a Negro musician who has assisted in Billy Graham crusades, led the 1,000-voice choir and the congregational singing.

Decisions for the Greater Evansville Crusade totaled 774, with 434 of these being professions of faith.

Wiley described the local response as tremendous. Wide coverage was given by Evansville's two newspapers and three television stations.

"Had this been strictly a Baptist meeting," Wiley observed, "we would have done well to have had one-third as many people attend."

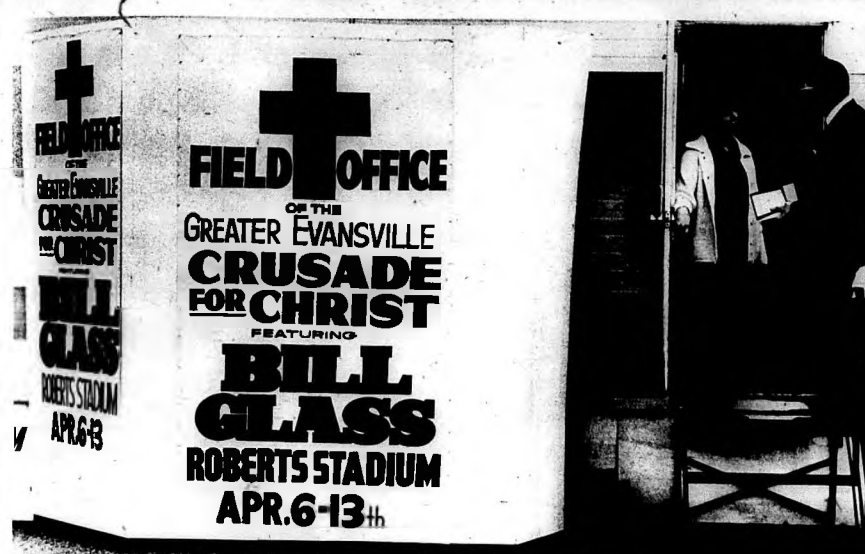
As Southern Baptists debate participation on the proposed nationwide evangelistic crusade for 1973, the Greater Evansville Crusade for Christ should serve as an encouragement. Southern Baptists can cooperate in projects of mutual concern without compromise.

At the same time Baptists in Indianapolis were cooperating in a Baptist United Crusade—an event which six months before almost was abandoned.

It was January 1968 that a group of Southern Baptist pastors of Central Indiana Baptist Association decided to seek an area crusade for the Hoosier capital city. Invitations were informally issued to other Baptist groups, with little response received.

With time for the Crusade of the Americas approaching, the association's missions committee contacted C.E. Autrey, director of the Division of Evangelism, Home Mission Board, Atlanta, and asked him to be evangelist for the Indianapolis crusade. Al and Ivy Welsh of Atlanta were scheduled to lead the

HOME MISSIONS



Evansville Crusade Headquarters
"Best to include all evangelicals"

music. The date was set, the place secured—then approaches were made to other Baptist groups.

About this time James P. Brewer, pastor of Eastern Heights Baptist Church, Indianapolis, was named evangelism chairman for the association.

A meager budget of \$3,000 was discussed.

Brewer recognized that in reality a Southern Baptist meeting had been planned, and then other Baptists had been called to help finance it. This became very plain at an August 1968 luncheon when representatives of these churches were invited to discuss crusade plans.

How poorly the procedures for the campaign had been communicated was expressed by R.T. Andrews, the elderly but surprisingly spry "dean" of Indianapolis National Baptist pastors. Andrews said, "My church will give you money for your crusade, but I can't ask my people to attend since any con-

continued



Indianapolis Evangelism Chairman Brewer (right)
"Few new Christians, lot of new brothers"

Contagious Cooperation

continued from page 25

Volunteer Interpreter
Crossing religious, racial and language barriers

Integrated Congregation in Indianapolis
Never sure just how "southern" Southern Baptists are



Counseling converts in Indianapolis
"This type crusade ought to be held in every city."



vert could not join any church he chooses."

When assured that this was not true, Andrews said simply, "I'm with you." Perhaps this statement was the actual beginning of the Baptist United Crusade and the continuing cooperation of Baptist groups in Indianapolis.

Brewer came to the Central Association's Executive Board's September meeting requesting a decision—either continue with a strictly Southern Baptist crusade as planned, or agree to cancel all previously made plans if the American and National Baptists would participate. The board chose the latter.

Two weeks later a breakfast was held at Andrew's church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Brewer apologized to the 120 Baptists present for going along without his fellow Baptists. He reported that Autrey had been contacted and would cancel happily if another evangelist was preferred.

After discussion, each body named three representatives to a steering committee.

The committee elected Brewer as general chairman and then overruled him by completely accepting the previously announced date, speaker, musicians and meeting place. When it was learned that Autrey would not be able to stay for the closing Sunday afternoon service, the committee made the logical choice of R.T. Andrews as speaker.

As the steering committee began to secure various other workers, something exciting began to happen to Baptists in Indianapolis. For obvious reasons Southern and American Baptists are suspi-

continued

Contagious Cooperation

continued from page 27

cious of each other in northern states. National Baptists have never quite been sure just how "southern" are Southern Baptists.

But as these pastors and laymen began to meet, work and pray together, a new and expanding appreciation appeared.

In all, 118 Baptist churches participated in the Baptist United Crusade—20 American Baptist churches, 37 Southern Baptist churches and 61 churches related to five National Baptist groups.

Blacks and whites sat side by side in the audience, the 300-voice choir and the counseling room.

Commenting on this aspect of the crusade, Autrey said, "This type crusade ought to be held in every city in our country. All people regardless of ethnic background or racial background ought to come together to worship God."

Attendance at the skating pavilion averaged about 2,000 each night with the largest crowd at the closing service when 3,800 came. Andrews said he never thought he would see such a service in Indianapolis, and certainly never dreamed that a black man would speak.

Noting that he is only the third generation from slavery, Andrews said, "It's a long way from the balcony to the pulpit, but by the grace of God I stand here today."

Only 21 of the 366 decisions recorded at the Riverside Pavilion were professions of faith. But as one SBC pastor expressed it, "We didn't see a lot of new Christians, but I surely found a lot of new brothers in Christ."

The budget for the Baptist United Crusade was \$26,000, but only \$19,000 was raised and spent. Of this \$8,000 came from the Home Mission Board, with the remainder from participating churches and offerings during the services. The largest financial contribution from a church came from an American Baptist congregation.

The participating pastors plan to continue monthly fellowship meetings and are considering the establishment of a liaison office to encourage and promote cooperative efforts among the various Baptist churches.

Perhaps the best definition of the impact of the Baptist United Crusade in Indianapolis was a phrase in a prayer by Mrs. E. Shephard, a black Baptist. She prayed at the Saturday night service, "We thank thee that we've been able to see no color this week."

THE CRUSADE ON TV

A National Response

Cards and letters arriving in the Home Mission Board's evangelism offices topped at a 100 a day three weeks after the nationwide Crusade of the Americas telecasts sponsored by Southern Baptists.

The three evangelistic telecasts, featuring evangelist Billy Graham and news commentator Paul Harvey, offered free material to anyone who would write to a special crusade box number in Atlanta.

Toward the end of May, the volume of mail (from all over the nation) neared 3000 and included nearly \$1300 in donations, despite the fact no financial appeal was made.

Some of the letters were critical of the "modern" format of the shows, a few were critical of personalities (see letters page), others contained obvious cries for help, but most were simple in content and commending in tone, asking for the free materials.

In response, the Board's Division of Evangelism is sending a packet of materials that includes several tracts, a registration blank for a correspondence Bible course, transcripts of Harvey or Graham as requested and a booklet called "Good News by a Man Named John," which is the Gospel of John in Today's English Version.

Some of the letters—such as one from a young homosexual—were appeals for help with spiritual doubts and personal problems.

"We are answering these personally," said Jack Stanton of the Home Mission Board.

Many of the correspondents easily matched the crusade tract-for-tract, enclosing tracts and materials about a

variety of causes, from opposition to sex education in schools to denunciations of the Supreme Court to support for fundamentalist religious endeavors.

Many of the letters were addressed to Billy Graham or to Paul Harvey. One was addressed to Graham Harvey in care of the Young American Crusade. Still another letter opened with: "Dear Jesus Christ, . . ."

One woman wrote: "Billy Graham is as near to the second coming of Christ as I shall live to see."

Most of the letters were straight down the middle, however, commending the basic evangelistic message of the telecasts and the generally patriotic themes of youth, the home, the nation.

One letter read: "It is so good to know there are left some people who have not swept God out with the trash."

Another letter expressed distaste for the use of folk music and popular music sounds, stating that Baptists "commit suicide when they depart from the usual arrangements of the usual hymns in favor of some highfalutin songs."

Others hailed the lack of an "institutional approach." In fact one complimentary letter expressed disappointment at the closing invitation of the telecasts being in a simulated church setting.

One young writer from Detroit expressed concern for Graham's health, wondering if his informal, sit-down style during the telecasts was "because your health is not good."

Stanton, who was coordinator for the film productions, said: "We are pleased with the response and we are anticipating even more after the scheduled telecasts early in May."



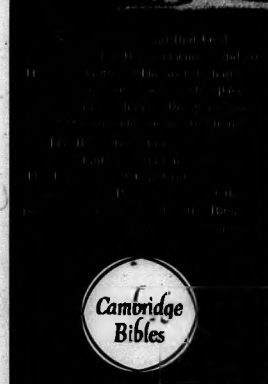
Photo by J. C. Durham, HMB

THE CRUSADE IN MIAMI

About 3,600 Cuban refugees continue to be airlifted to the U.S. monthly, and about 900 of each group remain in Miami, the Cuban refugee checkpoint. So it's not surprising that one of the Crusade of the Americas meetings to report the largest response from Spanish-speaking persons was held recently in Dade County, Fla. Evangelist Juan Luis Rodrigo Marin, left, pastor of First Baptist Church of Madrid, Spain, talks with a woman during the final service of the week's meetings when 41 persons publicly made professions of faith in Christ. During the entire crusade more than 1200 total decisions were recorded, including professions of faith by 625 Latins.



TO KEEP
HOUSE
END TO BE
A JOYFUL
MOTHER
Page 106



AT YOUR BAPTIST BOOK STORE

Two Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary scholars—Evangelism Professor Roy Fish and Ethics Professor William Pinson—tie into the social action-evangelism discussion

in a DIALOGUE TOWARD UNDER- STANDING

Pinson: The current Southern Baptist interest in social activism is causing considerable concern among some people. Why do you think this is true?

Fish: I think the concern is due primarily to the fact that some are afraid Southern Baptists will move a bit too far in the direction of social action. Traditionally we have been a people who have emphasized that the way of meeting basic human need is through preaching the gospel or giving witness to the saving acts of Jesus Christ. Some are afraid that if we move too far in our efforts to minister socially, we will neglect these larger areas which have been committed unto us by God.

Pinson: How far would you see as being too far? Is there some feeling that we already have gone too far in some ways?

Fish: I believe that articles even of this nature could be used to encourage some men to positionize themselves either in the camp of evangelism or social action. I think our calling so much attention to the fact that there seem to be two groups who contend that it is an either-or matter is stirring men to rally around a cause in a way they would not otherwise do.

HOME MISSIONS

Pinson: I think this is a good point though I don't know that I have ever heard it made exactly that way before. It may well be that we have said so much about the tension between the two—evangelism and social action—that we have polarized people into camps who otherwise might not even have thought about any tension between the two. Actually over the long haul of the Christian movement many churches and church leaders have been involved in both proclamation and application without exclusion of either. This has been true of a number of Baptists. Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher in London, established schools, built orphanages, organized societies to care for the poor and the aged, formed associations to sell good literature, fought economic injustice and denounced slavery—and earned a wide reputation as an evangelistic preacher. Alexander MacLaren, evangelist and Bible expositor, set forth his views on churches and social action in a sermon: "A dumb church is a dying church, and it ought to be. For Christ has sent us here in order, amongst other things, that we may bring Christian principles to bear upon the actions of the community, and not be afraid to speak when we are called upon by conscience to do so." As a pastor you led your church into a number of ministries; now as a seminary professor you teach evangelism. What do you think we could do to keep this division of people into separate camps from taking place, to bring the troops together, so to speak, in a united front?

Fish: You have called attention to the fact that throughout the history of the church there hasn't been any great problem. I think a return to the New Testament probably would be the simplest answer. Baptists traditionally have been a people, we say, "of the Book," and it is difficult for us to pattern either our personal lives or our churches after the New Testament without there being both initial experience with Jesus Christ and lifetime application of the ethic of Jesus Christ after he comes into our lives.

Pinson: Both the Old and the New Testaments clearly indicate that the people of God are to minister to total human need and to try to root out evil from the world. The Bible has at least as much to say about how Christians are to live as it does about how they can be born again. God's Word tells us that we have a responsibility to make family life, daily work, politics, race relations—all of human life—live up to God's ideal. In the light of clear biblical teaching then why are some opposed to Christians being involved in social action?

Fish: I think what most people are frightened of is extreme occupation of the church in an organized capacity in the area of social ministry or social action. This, as I see it, is the real problem. I don't think anybody would deny the fact that individual Christians ought to be involved in social action. But I think there are some who look askance at what I would call extreme church involvement, either as a local church or as a denomination, in social action.

Pinson: But, isn't it true that churches already have been involved in social actions? For example, some Southern Baptist churches have been involved in such things as local option elections on alcohol and fights against pari-mutuel gambling. Also some local churches have been involved in the defense of segregation or of a particular political outlook, such as extreme conservatism. The

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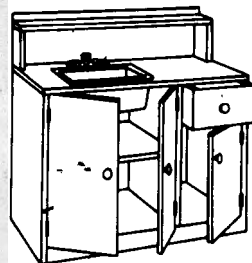
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problem apparently is not so much church involvement in social action but the kind of social action in which a church is involved. What ought to be the role of the church?

Fish: I think you put your finger on one of the glaring inconsistencies as far as our churches are concerned regarding the problem. There have been expressions of social concern, of course, on the part of the church. In view of the fact, then, that our churches have taken a stand and have become involved in certain social issues, I think the thing that makes churches extremely cautious here is that they see the danger of becoming so engrossed in social action that they overlook the fact that the church is an institution commissioned primarily to meeting the spiritual needs of men.

Pinson: The question seems to be one of degree: not, whether a church should be involved in social action but how and to what extent should it be involved? Most agree that the Christian is to be concerned about all of a man—spiritual, physical, emotional, mental. Most agree too that the church is to major on rightly relating man to God in Christ so that he can be a whole person. The question is, just how far should we go in ministry and social action as an expression of this right relationship to God? Or maybe another way of putting it, how can we use the expression of a Godly life through ministry and social action to aid evangelism?

Fish: You asked the question first relative to the degree a church should involve itself. I don't suppose anybody could give an exact answer for all churches. The major occupation of any church should always be sharing the good news of salvation in Christ. I suppose the tendency would be to think in terms of time and effort. What percentage of time should be involved in one or the other? What percentage of effort should a church extend in one direction and in the other? I think the important thing is for a church never to lose sight of the fact that man's basic need is spiritual and that God's first yearning for a man is that he know Jesus Christ in an experience of personal faith and receive what the New Testament calls everlasting life. It occurred to me that John 3:16 suggests that God's love really is fulfilled in a man only as he finds everlasting life. It indicates that God is interested basically in man coming to know Him and in man's experiencing salvation or everlasting life. The church must ever keep this uppermost in its concept of ministry—that God's primary intent for man is that man know Jesus Christ personally, that he receive everlasting life and out of this relationship become like the Lord Jesus. I think if the church keeps in focus on this particular interest as its primary objective, this would help solve the problem of the extent of church engagement in proclamation and application.

Pinson: In regard to that second question—how can ministry and social concern be related to evangelism—isn't it true that the biblical ideal is that God wants us to know him in Jesus Christ so that we can become like him, that is, so we can become Godly people? Isn't

everlasting life in a way a term which means Godly life? And if we become truly Godly people, won't this aid evangelism? Isn't there a relationship in that the expression of this kind of life becomes a sort of pre-evangelism, that is as the Christian ministers to human need and tries to make a better world, he favorably impresses the unbelievers who then are more open to his witness. Is there any validity to this?

Fish: There is validity as far as this opening the way to a man seeing what God is like and perhaps intensifying his interest to know more. However, I would hate for the church to think in terms of engaging in these kind of ministries strictly for the purpose of opening the door to help people spiritually. I would prefer that this be done much more spontaneously. I don't think Jesus used nor do I think we should use helping people as a "banana and a halter" kind of thing: You want to get a halter on a horse so you offer him a banana to get him in position where you can do it. I think the church ought to see a relationship between social ministry and evangelism, but I don't think that the church ought to be extremely conscious of the fact that this is the primary motivation for social action.

Pinson: A very good point! Christians should care for others because it is the Godly thing to do—not as a technique for winning converts. Yet, as a Christian entangles himself in social concern, he *does* aid the cause of evangelism. If social action is not to be a "banana and halter" approach to evangelism, should people be helped physically or mentally without offering any word of witness? It seems to me that to do so would be to fail to minister to the whole man.

Fish: I agree. I don't think the church ought to engage in social action without keeping in mind the great spiritual needs of those to whom the church ministers. I don't think Jesus helped people physically in what we might call social ministry merely for the purpose of leading them to himself. On the other hand, I don't think Jesus ever helped anybody physically or executed what we might call social ministry without having in his mind the fact that here is a person who has a great spiritual need and I will meet that spiritual need if this person will permit me to do so.

Pinson: If I understand what you say, there is no conflict between adequate evangelism and Christlike social concern; the two naturally go together. I would add that according to the Bible some persons will emphasize one and others another in their Christian lives according to the gifts God gives them—some evangelists, some teachers, some ministers, etc. We naturally will stress the aspect of the Christian life where our gifts guide us. All aspects of Christian ministry are important; none are to be scorned. One person may have gifts which lead him to spend most of his time in evangelism, another in social action and ministry. But both are to evangelize and both are to minister; neither is to downgrade the basic emphasis of the other. This is the way the great Christians of the past have lived and I hope it is the way Southern Baptists will live. ■

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photo by Jack Lauters

Cooperative Caring

by Helen Turlington
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Churches of different denominations can work together to help meet the needs of a community, as demonstrated by an organization known as the Inter-Church Council for Social Service which serves the Chapel Hill community located in Piedmont, N.C.

The Inter-Church Council began in 1960 when a number of concerned churchmen became involved in the problems of poverty which they were discovering in the midst of an otherwise affluent university community. Their efforts eventually led to the present organization which originally was sponsored by the ministerial association but now functions independently as an incorporated agency.

The council serves as the social service arm of the churches of Chapel Hill. Twenty congregations representing about 95 percent of the total number in the community currently support its work. Together they seek to fulfill the purpose of the ICC which is, as stated in the constitution, to "discover, publicize and appraise the human needs of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area which are otherwise unmet and to organize, coordinate, channel, support and direct volunteer efforts to meet these needs." The purpose is not to give charity, although emergency situations frequently

are confronted; but the end is always to couple help with a deeper and more permanent answer to family and individual needs.

In 1965, the Community Chest voted to include the ICC as a member agency thus making it possible to open an office staffed by a part-time executive secretary. In the summer of 1968, a professional social worker, also part-time, was added to work directly with families and individuals and to coordinate the services offered them. All other work of the council is done by volunteers, several hundred of them being involved each year in its activities.

The projects of the council are numerous and varied. Some have been terminated as other resources have become available to the community such as a legal aid clinic, the distribution of government surplus commodities to eligible persons, and a summer preschool program quite similar in purpose to Head Start. Now it cooperates with Head Start in such ways as enrolling children and providing transportation and chaperones to clinics for follow-up care. It was discovered several years ago that many school children were eating an inadequate lunch, some none at all. The ICC alerted the community to

this and funds were raised to feed these children until an adequate school lunch program could be worked out. A summer program for children has been a feature of the council almost from its beginning, including playgrounds activities, day care and a summer day camp.

Current projects include: a clothing cooperative which collects and distributes good used clothing; a home furnishings project providing used furniture and appliances; a tutorial program in the public schools jointly sponsored by the YW-YMCA of the University of North Carolina; a visiting program at local nursing homes which sponsors friendly visiting, therapy and recreational activities; a committee which provides transportation to the hospital, clinics and elsewhere to persons in such need; and, what many consider to be the very heart of the council's work, assistance to individuals and families.

Guidance and counsel is given and a loan and grant fund administers immediate emergency needs. In 1968 this fund made available \$3,500 to persons who had no other financial resources. This is done in the form of an interest-free loan if it seems reasonable to expect repayment. Most of the money goes for food, shelter and utilities

One of the most recent involvements and certainly the most ambitious is in the area of housing. This includes efforts within the community to upgrade existing housing as well as plans which are currently underway to sponsor 100 units of housing under a federal program which encourages churches and groups of churches to become involved in this way.

The ICC has from time to time sought to influence public opinion. It has, for instance, made an effort to direct people away from such traditional and wholly inadequate projects as Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets into an awareness of the conditions that create such needs. Efforts in the area of housing have helped to awaken the consciences of many church members, not only to needs of which they may have been unaware but also to certain of their own, sometimes latent, prejudices. For the first time some member churches have faced the question of churches becoming involved with the government in providing such things as housing for the low-income and elderly. A suggested new project will be the editing and distributing of a newsletter of current information which should be

of interest to church people who wish to be aware and involved.

Every effort is made to avoid duplication of services offered by other agencies. The council maintains a good relationship with local professional agencies. This relationship had to be earned and is due in large measure to the fact that the council seeks to carry out its own projects in a professional manner, made easier, no doubt, by the type of community in which it functions—a university situation which provides professionals of many kinds who are willing also to serve as volunteers. The flexibility of its organization and the absence of numerous guidelines make it possible for the ICC to be active in certain areas and to function in a manner often difficult for other agencies.

The financial support comes from the Community Chest, the churches and also from interested individuals. The budget for 1969 calls for a total of \$17,000 of which \$6,000 will come from the Community Chest and an anticipated \$9,000 will come from contributions and special offerings. It is anticipated that \$5,000 will be spent for

operating expenses and \$12,000 to carry out the various projects of the council.

The work of the council is directed by a board elected from the community at large which meets monthly and a larger body composed of two delegates from each participating church and one delegate from cooperating local social service agencies. The delegate body meets quarterly.

Local churches will have much to do with whether the war on poverty ends in victory or defeat. An organization such as the ICC, intensely responsive to the needs, frustrations and problems of the poor yet closely in touch with the generally affluent church people who represent much of the power within a community, can be of tremendous value. These efforts in Chapel Hill have significantly helped the community to be a better one for all its members. In addition, individuals and churches have had their awareness increased and their consciences awakened as they have been given opportunities to become actively involved. And a further real blessing is that churches have found a new, warm and rewarding fellowship with one another. ■

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Jesus, the Secular Pietist

continued from page 17

J. C. Hoekendijk, the Dutch theologian, has observed that the church never exercises its true function when it settles for mere philanthropy. We never really engage in service (diakonia) to man when we deprive him of the news that God has made peace (the kerygma) and leave him outside the fellowship of peace (the koinonia).

That which we are bound to seek, if we would be true to Christ, is a secular piety, a life of service to man which flows from a life of love of God. We are called to love our God with heart and soul and mind and strength and,

as a consequence of that relationship, to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

I wonder if perhaps there is a larger significance than we have hitherto thought to the fact that Jesus met with Moses and Elijah atop the mountain of transfiguration? Luke says they spoke with Jesus concerning his "exodus" (literally) which was to be accomplished in Jerusalem. To a Jew, the word "exodus" could mean only one thing—"a deliverance." So Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about the deliverance he was to put in motion in Jerusalem.

Here were two men who represented more than simply "the law and the prophets." Moses, himself, was the leader of an exodus—a deliverance of God's people from the physical bondage and oppression of Egypt. Similarly, Elijah was the leader of an exodus. At a time when the people of God were in spiritual bondage, worshipping at the altar of Baal, Elijah called God's people to come out saying, "If the Lord be God, then serve him."

The exodus which Christ begins in Jerusalem is one which incorporates the deliverance of Moses and Elijah and a

continued on page 37

Chaplains Prayer Calendar

JULY 2: Huey A. Bridgman, Ga., Army; James W. Greer, Fla., Navy; Ira G. Moss, Tenn., Army; Robert W. Tabb, Ky., Air Force. JULY 3: Geoffrey Knott Jr., N.C., Army; Kenneth J. Nettles, S.C., Air Force; William C. Taggart Jr., Ky., Army; William P. Brock, Ala., hospital. JULY 4: Joe D. Franklin, Okla., Air Force; James Conrad, Ark., hospital; Robert H. Honeycutt, N.C., Army. JULY 5: Oscar Harris, La., hospital; Sloan E. Lister Jr., Ky., hospital; J. Eugene Ryder, N.C., hospital. JULY 6: Kiyu Itokazu, Hawaii, Army; Blawett A. Smyth, Mich., hospital; Charles P. Van Frank Jr., Okla., Navy; William Everett Tumblin, Ga., Navy.

JULY 7: Winston P. Fox, Ga., Air Force; Franklyn D. Holley, Mo., Army; Charles N. Russell, Tex., Army; John C. Sargent, Ark., Army; John W. New, Okla., Air Force. JULY 8: Timothy O. Langston Jr., N.C., Navy. JULY 9: James C. Blanchard, Ky., Army; Joe M. Ellison, Tex., Army; Frank E. Garver, N.C., Navy; William H. Vinson, Tex., Navy; Terry M. Welborn, Mo., hospital. JULY 10: Elmer G. Horn, Miss., Army; Robert C. Tate Jr., Tex., Navy. JULY 11: William E. Donan Jr., Ky., Navy. JULY 12: Bruce Coltharp, S.D., Air Force; Richard L. Park, Fla., Army. JULY 13: Charles D. Bass, Tex., Army; Charles H. Wilkens, Tex., hospital; Kenneth Pepper, Tex., hospital; Earl D. Roderick, La., Air Force; Ray O. Swift, Ala., hospital; J. B. Cheshire Jr., Fla., hospital. JULY 14: Willie E. Buice, Ga., Air Force.

JULY 15: Charles A. Meek, Ark., Army; B. H. Tucker, Ark., hospital; Buster

P. White, Tex., Army; Frederick R. Funches, Ala., Army. JULY 16: Darrel C. Highsmith, Ill., Air Force. JULY 17: Elmer H. Ammerman, Mo., Army; Donald L. Crowley, Okla., Army; Alfred DeLossa Jr., Mass., Army; Earl Clayton Grandstaff, Tex., institution; Reuben V. Watts, N.C., Navy. JULY 18: Wayne Durham, La., hospital; Lowell C. Todd, La., hospital. JULY 19: Thomas T. Edwards, La., hospital.

JULY 20: Gene B. Andress, Ala., Navy; Gerald H. Akins, Tex., Air Force; Edwin A. Gates, Okla., Navy; Carroll L. Johnson, Tex., Air Force; DeWitt C. Nix, Ark., hospital; William P. Webb, Fla., Army. JULY 21: Louis D. Hendricks, Okla., Army; Horace Sams Jr., Ala., Army. JULY 22: David R. Morrison, Iowa, Navy; Byron Banta, Tex., Army; James E. Bishop, Tex., Army; Allen J. Harbison, N.Y., Air Force; Marion Ray Dandridge, Okla., hospital. JULY 23: Weldon and Ley, Tex., hospital. JULY 24: B.F. Bennett, Tex., hospital; Wilson C. Harmon, Mo., Air Force; Merle F. Pedigo, Ohio, Air Force; Phillip L. Tillman, Miss., Air Force.

JULY 25: Thomas D. Denson, Tex., Army; Harry W. Holland Jr., Fla., Navy; Joe L. Morris, Tex., Air Force; Robert E. Quigg, Mo., Air Force; Roddy Rendahl, Pa., Army. JULY 26: S. I. Bassett, Tex., hospital; Warren B. Bissett, Ga., Air Force; Hubert R. Hines, Ohio, hospital. JULY 27: Thomas J. Haley, Ark., Air Force; Wiley C. G. Hie, N.C., Air Force. JULY 28: Walker B. Feagins Jr., Ga., Navy; Kenneth R. Israel, Mo., Air Force; Billy J. McKee, Tex., Navy.

synthesis emerges in which men are loved, cared for and redeemed, in the dimensions of their humanity. He is the Saviour and healer of both body and soul.

This synthesis is seen in the further unfolding of the same story. Peter, James and John share this mystical experience with Christ and hear the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." Typically impetuous, Peter says, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Peter was quite prepared to stay on the mountaintop with Jesus and forget about the need and the hurt and the heartache which existed in the valley below.

Meanwhile, in that valley, at the foot of the mountain, the remaining nine disciples of Christ are face to face with the world's need as it is epitomized in the life of a young demon-possessed boy whose condition is sheer agony and hopelessness. His father has brought him to the disciples in the hope that they might be able to heal him. Jesus is not present, but the disciples are moved by this spectacle of human suffering, and they try in their own strength to bring healing to his hurt. But they can avail nothing.

Finally, rejecting Peter's plea, Jesus strides down the mountain of inspiration and devotion, into the valley of human need, clothed in the strength of God, and heals the poor demon-possessed boy. To the nine dismayed disciples, embarrassed by their failure, Jesus explains, "This kind can go forth only by prayer and fasting."

This is the lesson Christ would have us learn: the rejection of Peter's plea to stay on the mountain reminds us that the church cannot be the church when it seeks to wall itself off from the world and live on the mountaintop of its own religious experience. Personal piety is not enough, for the world waits for our ministry in the agony of the valley. But the nine helpless disciples in the valley remind us that the church has no power to heal the world's real hurt unless it has been alone with God on the mountain. Mere secular involvement will not suffice; we need the strength which God alone can supply.

The church is really the church only when, clothed in the strength and power of its communion with God, it moves with Christ into the valley of the world's need willing to suffer itself to be that hurt away and make men whole in both body and soul. Evangelism and social action are not in opposition, but are in fact, inextricably joined together as the very substance of our faith.

June, 1969



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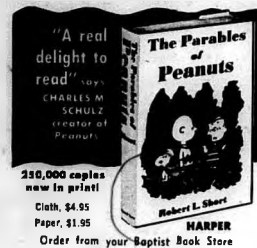
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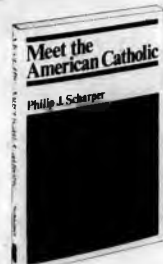
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SBC Church Joins Negro Convention

For what is believed to be the first time in Southern Baptist Convention history, a predominately white Southern Baptist church in St. Louis, Mo. has joined the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., maintaining dual alignment with the SBC.

The action was taken by the Christ Memorial Baptist Church in St. Louis as a practical step to implement locally the "Statement Concerning the Crisis in Our Nation" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston last June.

Bill Little, pastor of the church in suburban St. Louis, said that it was the first Southern Baptist church in Missouri to join a predominately Negro convention, and that he believed it is the first such church in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Victor Glass of Atlanta, director of the Home Mission Board's work with National Baptists, said that as far as his office could tell, it was the first SBC church to become dually-aligned with a Negro Baptist body and the SBC.

Glass called the church's action a creative step. "This is a way of saying to black Baptists, 'you have something to give to help me, and I have something to learn from you,'" said Glass.

Little said that the church voted in April to join the Antioch Missionary Baptist District Association, affiliated with the Missouri Missionary Baptist Convention, and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. The association accepted the church into its membership, Little said, and the church sent messengers to the associational meeting in May.

The church took the action, not only in response to the statement on the crisis which urged local congregations to act to improve race relations, but also in response to a statement directed to the entire church by the young people urging "openness, loving acceptance and ministry to all segments of our society."

The youth of the church, with the approval of a youth coordinating committee, presented the statement to the church last June (three weeks after the SBC action), explaining that by "openness, loving acceptance and ministry to all segments of society, we mean that

the doors of our church are open to all people, and more than open, we invite and encourage all to be a part of our fellowship."

Little said that the church, located in the suburbs, has no local Negro members, but there are five Nigerian students who are members of the church. Little said the church has shown a great deal of interest and support of inner-city ministries in St. Louis.

The pastor said he felt the action was a step in the right direction, and that he wished other SBC churches would do the same, looking toward the day that the SBC and the Negro convention could merge. He admitted that day might be 20 years away.

The pastor said that reaction to the decision by the church had been very favorable. The vote ratio was about 18 to 1 in favor of the motion. The church has about 900 members, but less than 100 were present at the business meeting when the vote was taken.

Little said that his church might not be the first in the SBC to take such action, but he had not been able to learn of others. There are three or four other SBC churches that are very seriously considering it.

In Kentucky, the state convention adopted a resolution urging SBC churches in that state to seek dual alignment with Negro churches. Four churches, three of them in Louisville, are at various stages in moving in this direction, but none have yet joined a Negro convention, said Herman Wiley, director of work with National Baptists in Kentucky.

Glass said that there is a possibility that some SBC churches in Florida, Texas, California or the District of Columbia, also might be dually-aligned but he did not have any specific information. As far as we know, this is the first, he said.

Little said that the church has been looking for ways to identify with the Negro community in general, and with Baptists in particular. We have been looking for a way to open channels of communication more clearly between the races," he added, saying he was convinced God led the church in this "concrete expression of our concern and love."—BP.



ENCOUNTER

by Kenneth Day

For 50 years she has kept watch over her beloved disenfranchised. She believes in the hopeless. She dignifies the destitute. She battles defeat and wins. She is more than a mission. Rachel Sims Baptist Center is a living hope springing in the breasts of all who have gone through her doors since first they opened in 1919. Her children and friends are legion.

The "Irish Channel" section (sometimes called the "Dark Channel") of New Orleans, an area of more than 700 square blocks populated by almost two dozen nationalities, long had been a seedbed for crime and criminals. Organized gangs, narcotic rings and gambling interests repeatedly intimidated those concerned with making this riverfront area a respectable community in which families could be reared in Christian decency.

The typical threatening tyranny is seen in this report which came from the early days of Baptist mission work there: "If an illness or accident occurred at night, as they did many times, the police had to get the Charity Hospital ambulance to take the person in a patrol wagon to the hospital for the doctor would go into that neighborhood at night."

It was into this area that Rachel Cabe came in 1923. Under the sponsorship of Baptist churches and the Home Mission Board, students of the Baptist Bible Institute (now the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) had first begun mission work in this section in 1919. For 18 months prior to her acceptance of the directorship of Clay Square Mission (named Rachel Sims Memorial Mission only after her death) Miss Sims studied at the Baptist Bible Institute and worked extensively in

mission activities along the waterfront. Her decision to move into the "Dark Channel" area was contested by some of her closest friends because of her frail physical condition. One missions professor predicted she "wouldn't last five minutes, living in that lawless neighborhood." But what she lacked in physical stamina was compensated overwhelmingly for by creative and productive spiritual resources. In just seven years she whipped a multi-mission program into order. An almost endless variety of ministries was conducted daily, reaching into hundreds of homes and changing scores of persons, when in 1930 Miss Sims died of a heart attack.

During the next five years the mission work continued under various leaders. In 1935 Miss Gladys Keith assumed directorship of the mission, and for 24 years gave good strong leadership consistent with the tradition of her predecessor. During her long tenure the riverfront experienced a remarkable expansion of Baptist mission work. Other mission centers, including Toledano, Bowen and Carver, were established. In 1939 Third Street Baptist Church was organized by persons reached through the mission centers. Since then the Toledano and Bowen Centers have been discontinued.

On May 10 the Rachel Sims Center celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The next 50 years will raise increasing challenges to the weekday ministries in New Orleans. At present more than 1400 persons are enrolled in ministries offered by the centers. Charles McCullin, Baptist Center director for the New Orleans area, reported a total of 3041 persons attending one or more mission activity.

First Lady of the Riverfront

There are 576 youth and adults enrolled at the Rachel Sims Mission, and almost every group or club has a waiting list. The Mothers' Club, one of the most popular, has 23 waiting to enroll. Along with ceramics and other handwork, a Bible study period is conducted. The *Good News For Modern Man* translation has been used with marvelous results. With 85 to 90 percent of those in attendance being Roman Catholic, this clear and simple presentation of the Scripture has been received eagerly. In fact many mothers have returned to ask for additional copies for other family members. One mother wanted a copy for her daughter, saying "this is the translation the Catholic church is using in her catechism classes."

The staff at Rachel Sims consists of Director Richard Wilson and his wife, three full-time missionaries, three student interns (from New Orleans Seminary) who work 20 hours each week, 38 volunteers from the seminary who are working on field assignments and a host of volunteers from the churches. From time to time a number of young ladies from the Southern Baptist Hospital School of Nursing and social work students from Tulane University will join the staff for a quarter, a semester or a year.

Motivated by a proud heritage and an unending variety of needs around them, the workers at Rachel Sims launch their second half-century. The enlarged ministry will include two new programs—a counseling clinic providing psychological help for persons in need and a tutoring ministry for students of primary and secondary schools. "And other ministries will follow," says Director Wilson, "as needs arise and resources are available."—



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C. E. AUTREY, DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM, BAPTIST HOME MISSION BOARD

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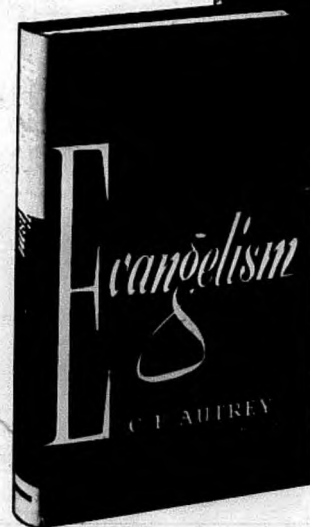
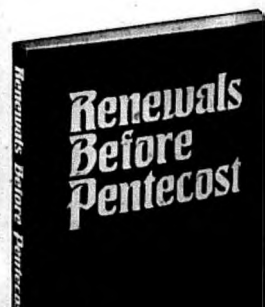
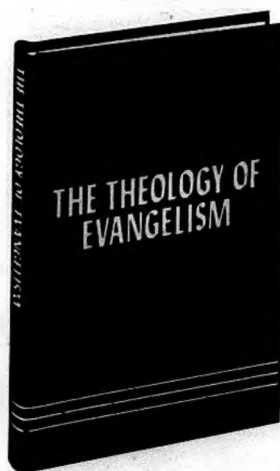
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