

**Toward
Mission in a Polarizing
Society**

Comment

by Walker L. Knight

ON FINDING MISSION IN A POLARIZING SOCIETY

Nearly four years ago I heard Roger Shinn predict that denominations would polarize between those who could accept change and those who could not—"the go-go crowd vs. the status quo crowd," as he stated it. We have come only a short span to see so strong a polarization take place. But it is an oversimplification to characterize the differences only along these lines.

We can accept change in certain areas, but we also find it difficult to accept other changes in other areas. Consequently, we all enter the future with some ambivalence.

In our society, change has reached near crescendo proportions, and rapid change becomes a phenomenon of its own. In a time of accelerated change the processes which hold society together break down and men search for a new cement; the "silent majority" awakens. The radical left activates the radical right. Almost everyone is forced to look for assurance, for meaning, and for the gleam of light at the end of the tunnel of time.

We should also force ourselves to look for reasons for the disturbances, instead of seeking scapegoats. In our search for excuses and answers we are often victimized by the following fallacies:

(1) Problems are caused by bad people; (2) Problems are caused by talking about them; (3) All people would like to see the problems solved; (4) Problems will solve themselves; (5) "Getting the facts" will solve the problems.

Each of these fallacies has just enough truth in it to mislead us. For instance, the fallacy that problems are caused or even aggravated by talking about them victimizes a public already trapped by polarizing fear and by

a deep-seated desire to be isolated from, not exposed to, problems. Yet we face a constant reporting (in depth) of problems most of us feel inadequate to cope with because of their magnitude: no longer is the problem discrimination of a few, but the knowledge that racism plagues the nation; no longer is it the hunger of a nearby migrant family, but the starvation of the world; no longer is it the pollution of a favorite fishing stream, but the despoiling of the nation's water resources. And on and on and on.

On the other hand, the fallacy that "getting the facts" will solve problems victimizes those in the mass media or in education. We work hard at such fact-gathered solutions in writing and teaching. However, we are usually weak on application and action.

The point is, we are all subject to being victimized according to our interests.

But this is the season of the incarnation—when God in Christ assumed his humanity, becoming lovingly involved in the burdens, needs and heartaches of men. In his life, we not only received insight into the nature of God, but we received a clearer example of how life is to be lived.

In Christ, we find one who lives by dying, who keeps his life by giving it away, who wins by losing. He above all is a Man for Others.

In this season of his birth, we must find our strength in him to be fully involved in the problems of men, and thereby strong enough to put our arms around drowning men and direct them to him.

In this Christmas season, we must begin to practice, year 'round, Christ's attributes of kind-

ness, gentleness, loving concern and empathy. We must understand our neighbor, rather than condemn him for differing hair style or color or way of thinking.

And in this season of giving, we must recognize the gift we can offer our fellowmen: the gift of acceptance, his right to be a person, unique, original and very rare.

Too often when we differ with someone, we question more than his points of difference. We tend to question his theology, his patriotism, his commitment to Christ, or his motivation.

There is tragedy inherent within any situation which brings individuals to the point where they cannot communicate, where fellowship is broken, where polarization reaches separation. Such tragedy is compounded when the people involved are Christians, Christ's agents of reconciliation; and when the time is Christmas, a remembrance of the birth of him who reconciles us.

In some respects, Southern Baptists are moving toward a polarization, as evidenced at Denver. But in other respects there is movement toward greater unity of mission and ministry. This issue was prepared with both of these trends in mind.

The five primary articles are based on a series of messages given by Executive Secretary Arthur B. Rutledge at Glorieta Baptist Assembly this year. These messages present the philosophical and theological basis for the agency he heads, and they are a call to commitment to Christ and his church. And to a concern for the world into which Jesus Christ came—some 1,970 years ago this month—and for which he lived, and died. ■

PHOTOS BY DON RUTLEDGE



MISSION IN A POLARIZING SOCIETY

by Arthur B. Rutledge
Executive Secretary-Treasurer, HMB

A Faith Worth Sharing

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved, through faith. It is not your own doing, but God's gift. There is nothing here to boast of, since it is not the result of your own efforts. God is our Maker, and in union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good works, which he has already prepared for us to do.

• Ephesians 2:8-10

A quarter of a century has passed since a mushroom-shaped cloud changed the course of history by annihilating a Japanese city. The date was August 6, 1945, a day that many consider pivotal in the epic of man.

On that day war became impossible, violence unnecessary, racism idiotic, religion imperative. Because it made human life cheap, human life became precious. That day divided generations and split thought processes into post-bomb and ante-bomb. And that day opened the mind of man to new, uncharted, unfamiliar courses; cast a giant, nervous, threatening shadow over the eye of earth.

Twenty-five years since that day, the troubling shadow still darkens the United States. Clearly our human family is still plagued by such outdated activities as war, violence, promiscuity, racism, secularism. And religion—Christianity—is fading as an influence in guiding the lives and conduct of men.

Why? Why are men continuing these practices of the past? Why do injustices endure? Why do men find it so difficult to live together in harmony? Why do we, as a people, rip ourselves apart over the issues of war, peace, race, wealth, violence, government, crime, freedom?

Perhaps it is this question—this quest for “Why?”—as much as any other, that has caused the great rift that threatens to destroy this nation. The young ask it of the old, the old ask it of the young. And both bombard the middle-aged with it. “Why?” ask all the helpless, uncomprehending generations, “why?”

Do we Christians not have the answer to the searing search for meaning and being in an increasingly polarizing

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Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from Today's English Version of the Bible

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society? I believe we do. I believe we have this to say: In spite of widening divisions, of human perversity, of complex problems, God loves the world. He agonizes over it. And he offers it his reconciling love.

You and I, as Christians, have the staggering responsibility and the incredible privilege of voicing this message of divine concern in a time when the human family desperately cries for new hope.

New hope comes through faith in God's grace. Jesus Christ was the perfection of this grace, the embodiment of God's love; we are incapable of "earning" this grace. Because we are created in the likeness of God, we are impelled to reveal our awareness of our kinship to the Father through our actions—our "good works"—here on earth. "By grace are you saved through faith."

This is the good news, the message worth sharing with mankind.

The grace of God; the love of God—reflected, amplified, and magnified through Jesus Christ. Through him we understand the ingredients of God's grace: the goodness, mercy and concern that offer us forgiveness, reconciliation, meaning and purpose in life, an opportunity for service to others and fellowship with God.

When I read, "By grace are you saved through faith," I visualize a giant reservoir holding pure water. But to get that water to a house, pipe lines must be laid from the reservoir to the house. Then the water can flow freely. However, it is water, not the pipe, which slakes thirst. In the same way, faith does not save, but God's grace. Faith is "the pipe," grace is the "water." It is by grace that we are saved.

And yet I wonder, as I think about this basic concept, if its profound meaning has really sunk in. Consider it another moment: our hope is not our own goodness, attainments, abilities or intelligence. Too often we neglect our Christian responsibilities. But God loves us in spite of us.

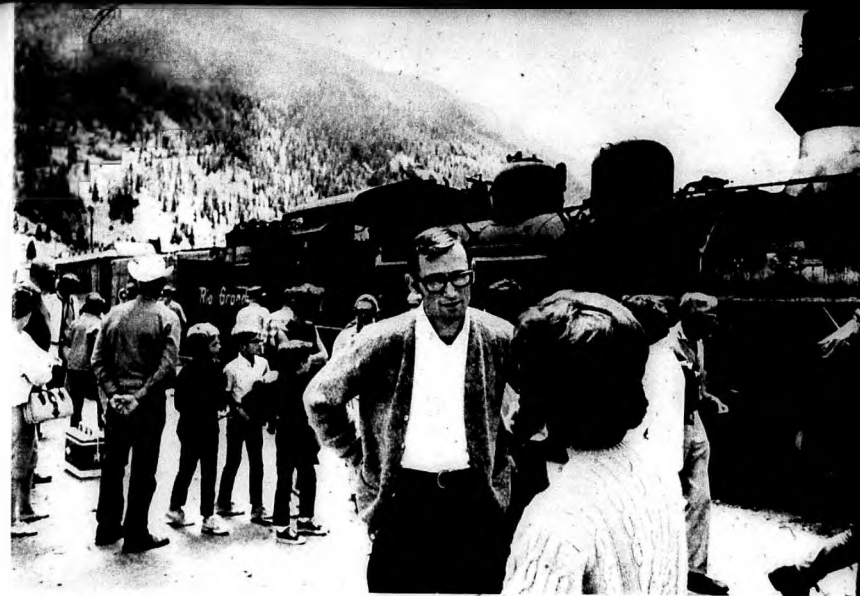
This past summer I traveled to the Orient. Everywhere one sees evidences of Buddhism—ornate, expensive shrines, small spirit shrines, shrines in homes and even businesses.

Buddhism, we are told, is a process of self-discipline by which men through their own attainments, finally reach spiritual deliverance. A Buddhist need not believe in God; this is immaterial. Through his actions, coupled with a series of reincarnations and advances from one life to the next, he eventually earns "salvation."

But when is a Buddhist good enough? When, in fact, is a Moslem or a Christian good enough? When is anyone good enough?

Everyone does wrong, at one time or another, and wrongdoing separates one from God. God recognizes that we, as creatures, rebel against him, yet he loves us. He knows we cannot be good enough or strong enough and he comes to us in matchless love to say, "I am forgiving. I offer new life, new hope, new strength."

How many of us understand this? And how many of us



are nearer the Buddhist idea of self-salvation than the Christian concept of redemption through God's gift? In days of tragedy we are inclined to ask, "What have I done to deserve this?" as if when we are good, things will go right, and when we are not so good, things will go badly.

Some Christian churches actually preach "requirements" for "getting right with God," including taking ordinances or sacraments, keeping certain laws and/or becoming church members.

I submit to you that the world, so confused, so tempted, so buffeted by conflict and hate and distrust and greed and selfishness—the world needs the news today, that grace is a gift of God.

These are times of racking discouragements, pessimism, negativism; men need to know there is a balm. And I think that if we are going to be effective disciples of Jesus, we must understand that this is hope, this is help, this is the light in a dark sky. This is, in fact, the good news, the message men need to hear.

But words are cheap today. Under the barrage of radio, TV, movies, magazines, newspapers and books, words have become weighted, dulled, sometimes ineffective. Who values free advice? Who stands still to hear platitudes repeated ad nauseum? Who stops to listen to monotonically mouthed monologues? Who gives attention to emotionally charged super sermons?

Today, perhaps as never before, there is a need to communicate to a worried, weary world the realization that hope is available, that through the example of Christ, life has new meaning and purpose; and that grace is God's gift to an undeserving human race. This is the good news we Christians must carry to all mankind, in every location and station in life—from the wealthy in the bright and beautiful resorts of Colorado, to the poor in the blighted and dark ghettos of New York.

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*For the helpless, faith is hope.
For the helper, faith is action.
a solid conviction that moves him
from his apathy and lethargy into a
dynamic, vital, caring ministry
for others. Faith is mentally,
physically, verbally reacting to
the commands of Christ's good news.
For the Christian realizes, as
James wrote, "What good is it for
a man to say, 'I have faith,' if
his actions do not prove it . . .
This is how it is with faith; if
it is alone and has no actions
with it, then it is dead."*

Words! Words! Words! The verbal assault continues to hammer, browbeat, cajole, entice, invite, shock, console until we reach a point at which everything is turned off on as easily as a TV switch.

This basic devaluation of the symbols of communication is the reason, in our rejoicing of the Good News, we should not overlook the fine print. For we have a nonverbal means of communicating the message itself.

We cannot "earn," through individual or collective efforts, the security of eternal existence with God. But "we are God's workmanship, created in Jesus Christ to do good . . ." It's all in the same package in Ephesians. But how easy it is to slide over this clause to manufacture what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace."

We cannot, in this turbulent world, ignore the cost of discipleship. For it is high; it requires a response, a commitment. It demands action.

How foolish it is for us to think that God works with those who open their minds to him, that he infuses them with strength to hate the wrong and love the right, to be clean, honest, worthy. And then expects them to do nothing about the unclean, dishonest, unworthy. Just sit back and relax, smug in eternal security.

How foolish it is to think that just because God's grace is sufficient, because works play no role in salvation, God is unconcerned about the kind of life we live, the sort of Christianity we project.

We cannot be indifferent to matters of morality, character and relationship with our fellowmen. When we speak of the gospel the world needs, we are talking about a gospel with a strong back.

That we are saved by grace through faith is true. But is it only partial truth, for we are compelled to explain what faith is. Faith is more than mentally acknowledging belief in a few basic tenets of New Testament revelation.

James wrote that "the devils" believe there is a God and the realization scares them; they tremble. But they keep right on being evil. Their belief in a god doesn't make a bit of difference in their lives.

Faith is belief that makes a difference. It is the kind of commitment that lets God make changes in us. It is the kind of belief that carries with it surrender to the amazing, frightening, terribly difficult teachings of Jesus, teachings that urge peace, love, brotherhood, humility, self-sacrifice, kindness, gentleness and servitude to others.

Have we always understood this to be the way of faith? Or have we offered, again and again, grace so cheap it became worthless as a life-changing, life-giving force?

Faith is more than a mental act. It's a physical act of strong will, transforming, totally, one's outlook toward life. Faith helps man comprehend the full meaning of living, for the man of faith sees the world through Jesus' life. And moves—through words and action—to tell others of the faith of fulfillment he knows.*





MISSION IN A POLARIZING SOCIETY

A Firm Moral Commitment

Do everything without complaining or arguing, that you may be innocent and pure. God's perfect children who live in a world of crooked and mean people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky, as you offer them the message of life.

• **Philippians 2:14-15a**

However willing and anxious we may be of sharing this message of life, we shall not be able unless we personally, individually have a firm moral commitment to the work and will of God.

But what does it mean to have a firm moral commitment in the Age of the New Morality?

For the growth years of the United States, before the nation entered the era of affluence, the Puritan Ethic was the standard of morality. That ethic emphasized personal virtues, hard work, self-restraint in sexual and other pleasures, and a sense of specific inter-related duties involving family, government and God.

Traditionally, politicians were for "God, mother, country and apple pie"; families were "close-knit units"; religion served as a "Thou-shalt-not" guideline for living.

That ethic still runs strong in the American veins. But the country has run away, rather heedlessly, perhaps, from the conditions that made that attitude viable and constructive. It is not so much that the Puritan ethic has become invalid as it has become outdated. America has been metamorphosed and new images flutter kaleidoscoping patterns of morality against "Establishment" walls.

In the transition, we are passing through a heady, reeling age that gropes, blindly and weakly, for stability. Dr. Benjamin Spock, in *Decent and Indecent*, recognized this: "In our so-called emancipation from our Puritan past," he writes, "I think we have lost our values."

Today is the time to reaffirm the values of a "Thou shalt" religion—a religion that simply but eloquently commands us to love God first and, second, to love our fellowman as we love ourselves.

We must step beyond the pale light of a negative religion into the brightness of positive Christianity, offering all men—the crooked, the perverse, the sordid, the sex mad—Christ's message of life.

Our standards are God-given. Words printed on magazine pages, pictures flashed on TV screens—neither are our authority. By deliberately choosing to commit our lives to God, we become his people under his authority.

As people of God, we are not to "conform outwardly to the standards of this world" but to set the standards for it.

In home missions, my colleagues and I urge constantly that we Southern Baptists be imaginative and creative and fresh in our approaches to reach people for Jesus Christ.

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In the distrustful, doubting deceitful world of the 1970s, men ask Christians to prove their commitment by honestly living as examples of Christ's love and concern. To do this, missionaries engage in many unusual "types" of mission—from offering recreation activities such as basketball to stimulating self-expression and creativeness through art—all in an attempt to help men realize a strong, personal moral commitment through Jesus Christ. But no matter how up-to-date our methods, it is the belief in the transforming power of Christ that drives us.

We try new methods, approach old problems in different ways, test what may seem to be circuitous routes in our attempts to communicate with isolated, alienated, disenfranchised people in our land. Such an attitude of experimentation requires that we be concerned about the total man, about his social as well as spiritual problems.

But while we may be methodologically mod and technologically up-to-date in expressing our Christian faith and compassion by remedying social problems, we always remember that nothing substitutes for personal moral commitment.

The call of the children of God is to be different. Rather than conform to the external mores of society, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," reads the King James Bible so beautifully.

For many years, I have been sensitive to the ethical dimensions of the gospel. During seminary I majored in Christian ethics, for I had the feeling that often in our preaching of the doctrines of grace, we zealously evangelistic Baptists have not given adequate attention to Christian character building or preparation to becoming the kind of human beings God means us to be in conduct, in attitude, in spirit, in relationship with fellowmen.

As I read my New Testament, I am impressed, again and again, with the frequency and clarity and total extent of references to Christian conduct.

These teachings are not burdens placed on our shoulders by a heartless god; they are guides to relieve us of back-breaking sorrows and heartaches.

In our day of relativism and situation ethics, ethical standards have not been altered, abridged or abrogated. Values have not changed, no matter what *Playboy* writes or Hollywood shows.

God is. His word remains the rule to live by. And if people run counter to his word, if they break his rule, they break themselves.

No one is immune, neither you nor I. Unless we, as Christians, are willing to be different, we will lose our prophetic voice, our opportunity to influence society. I repeat, as people of God, we are to live like people of God.

But how are we to do this in such a culture? It's hollow to say, "Be Christian!" unless we relate Christ's principles to the social and cultural milieu in which we live. Let me suggest three attitudes on which we might build an effective witness:

First, we must admit our weaknesses. Few men are able to repeatedly withstand trials and temptations; we need not only to avoid evil, but also to avoid the appearance of evil. We must set for ourselves high standards and never waiver in our efforts to meet them.

Second, we must look to God for strength. We recognize that we are only human, with all a human's faults and foibles. But we have a power outside ourselves, greater than ourselves, on which to lean. So let us set high standards, glad standards, and determine to live up to them. We'll not be perfect, but by determining to try, we'll come nearer.

Third, we must maintain a closer walk with God. We are not alone as we personally face the moral pressures of today. A young friend of ours, a summer missionary serving in Atlanta, found this to be true.

He's a Californian named Ron Davidson. Tall, lanky, with long hair, mustache and beard. He looks like a hippie, but clean. Recently he was telling us at the Home Mission Board about his work in the hippie community.

"I haven't yet had the kind of stories of success I'd like to tell you about," Ron said. "I have worked with young people like myself. And one thing that has happened is that I have come to realize that if I am going to be able to communicate with them I have to pray more and I have to study my Bible more, and I have to come to a personal level of deeper commitment than I have come to thus far."

Ron at 20 has realized what many Christians fail to understand at 60—that to stay clean in difficult surroundings and to communicate the love of God in a hostile environment, we have to find God's strength in new ways. But thank God that strength is available. By God's grace, we must renew our dedication to him to be his servants, striving toward perfection, never giving up the impossible dream, seeking always to be stars shining in a darkened sky, pointing people to Christ's life and love.





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A Love for the Church

Many of them believed his message and were baptized; about 3,000 people were added to the group that day. They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship means and the prayers . . . All the believers continued together . . . and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed . . . And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

• Acts 2:41-47

Where is the true church today? Years ago, during a Texas pastorate, a young mother said to me, "I believe in Christianity, but I don't believe in the institutional church."

That kind of remark was rare in those days; it is becoming increasingly common today.

For the church is under attack. Some in our society accuse it of being hypocritical, of preaching what it will not practice; others accuse it of sidestepping the "issues," of not getting involved in the world's problems; others accuse it of being too worldly, of being involved in areas in which it has no place.

Seemingly from all sides, the church is bombarded with secular and sacred criticism, racked by doubts from within and without. But even critics do not seem to focus a true picture of the church.

What is the church to be? And what is its role in human society in the 1970s?

The experience at Pentecost gives us a view of the church as it should be. On one day, three thousand people from varied backgrounds turned to Christ. They bound themselves together by a common tie of life commitment to him. They willingly let that dedication change them; their conversion was, in fact, an experience that radically altered their lives.

The church they formed was marked by warm fellowship, by frequent corporate worship, by liberal sharing of possessions, and by effective witnessing. Apparently they built no new buildings, but met in the Temple and in private homes. Their church was people, not structures—people characterized by their concern for others and the quality of their lives—people who had sympathy for the needs of others, people with a strong motivation to express verbally their new faith.

In Ephesians, Paul writes of the revelation that redemption is not only for Jews, through whom God had worked for centuries, but also for Gentiles. "I am less than the least of all God's people," he wrote, "yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News of the infinite riches of Christ and to make all men see how God's secret

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The physical plant we call "church" may be large or small, with creaky wooden floors or soft plush carpets, with translucent windows or stained glass. It may be a converted trailer, or a massive auditorium. The building makes little difference in the composition of a church, for a church is people, people committed to the principles of Christian discipleship. Anytime we unite to worship, to work, to minister, to witness, we become the church of Jesus Christ in the years of the '70s.

plan is to be put in effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the ages past, in order that . . . *by means of the church*, his wisdom might be revealed. Through the church, God is today making known the glorious truth of his love for all men.

The church—each local body as well as each individual follower of Christ—alone experiences an intimate relationship with the Son of Man. Several times the church is metaphorically referred to as the "body of Christ." Christ directs and his followers, as church members, respond. The church is uniquely commissioned to proclaim God's redemptive message, to represent Christ in every cause for righteousness and for decency, and to offer love, faith, hope and "the abundant life" to all mankind.

I have a deep conviction that the most effective evangelism is church-related. Many Christians do witness separately from the church; sizable movements of people only loosely related to any church or denomination are revealing Christ's message in different ways. I am thankful for them and for anyone who points people to a life-style based on Christ's.

But it seems that an effort to lead people to Christ without properly understanding the relationship of a believer to a church is evangelism lacking depth. The New Testament plainly says that believers do not live in isolation; they must gather for needed fellowship, for the strength and courage resulting from corporate worship experiences.

People who are committed to the principles of Christian discipleship compose the church, the 1970s body of Christ. They unite to worship together, to work together, to minister together, to witness together.

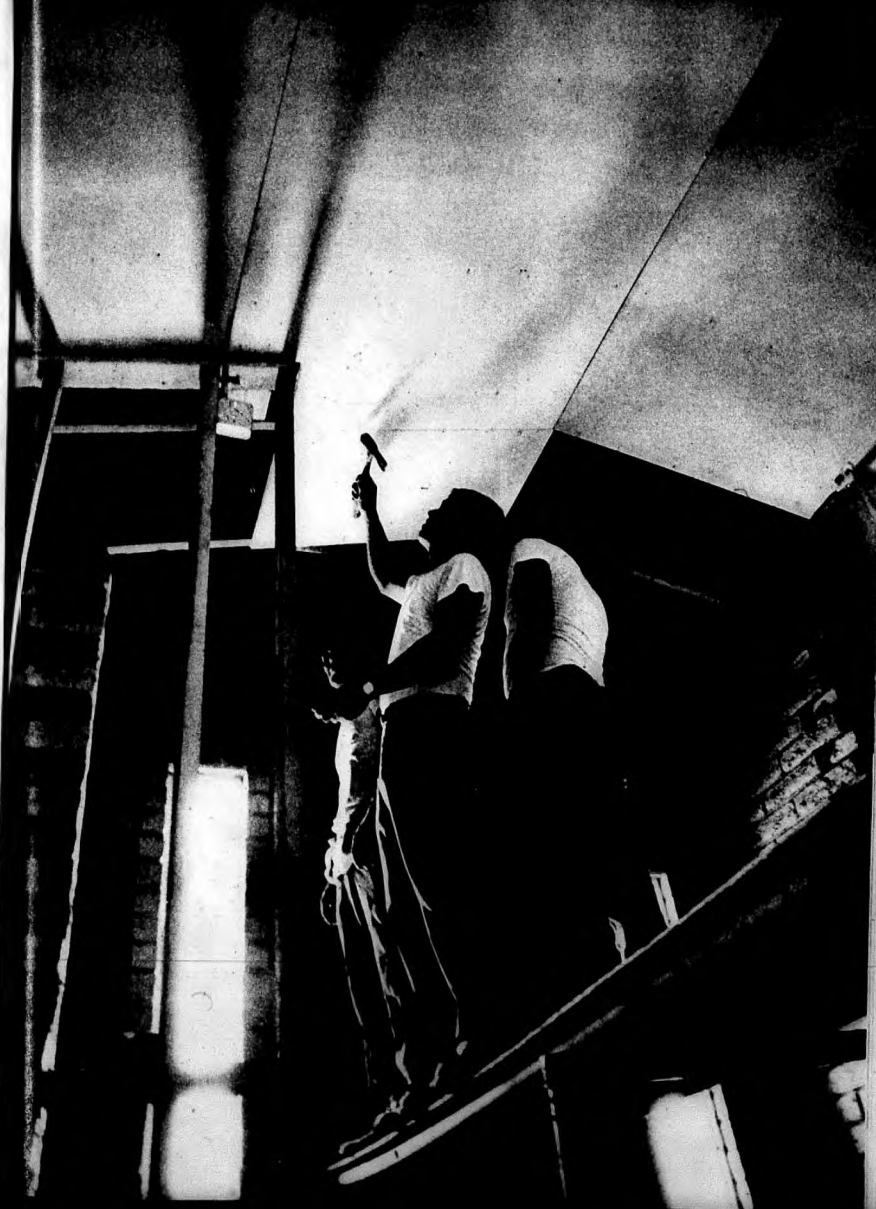
We misunderstand God's will if we think our sole responsibility is bringing persons to a profession of faith in Christ. In the Great Commission, Jesus said, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

The command to "make disciples" is followed by a second command, "to baptize," and a third, "to teach" all new disciples to obey the doctrines espoused by Christ.

Just as birth is only the beginning of life, conversion is only the beginning of living. The individual's public act of commitment follows his decision to accept Christ; the rest of his life then becomes a gradual maturation process, as the new-born Christian grows in his understandings of, and ability to practice, the teachings of Christ. To fully develop as a Christian, he needs the companionship of other Christians. He needs a church. For this reason, evangelism not anchored to the church is something less than Jesus expects his followers to practice.

The church has played a significant role in shaping and directing my life. The best things that have happened to me

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Many churches have been accused of promoting organizations and sustaining themselves rather than truly serving their members' and mankind's needs. In the '70s, SBC churches may evaluate programs in terms of service. The results will be varied, but one result likely is a more person-centered church, a church showing its love for people in the singular, in one-to-one relationships in the classroom and on the playground.



in life have happened to me because of the church. Thank God for the Christian movement and for those churches of which I have had the privilege to be a part. Thank God for a denomination, for a broader Christian fellowship, in which I have had a chance to participate. I love the church and am grateful for it.

Nevertheless, I am aware that the church in its organized form is not perfect. Today, reflecting a growing nonecclesiastical mood, it is experiencing difficulties and problems.

Church attendance figures among Southern Baptists, for instance, show a decline in the number of participants in church program organizations.

Within the past year, a survey revealed that three of four Americans think religion has declined in influence, compared to only one of four with that opinion ten years ago.

Critics give many reasons for the church's decreasing influence: (1) The church is more concerned with its own

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survival than serving mankind; (2) churches are so bound by tradition they cannot face the changing conditions of today's society; (3) the churches have become so organization-oriented they cannot show compassion toward people; (4) too often, churches are made up of half-committed Christians who are unable to relate convincingly the meaning of a Christ-centered life.

Honesty compels me to admit that I have seen churches in which some, or all, of these criticisms are true. And I must confess that the Christian movement has been weakened by half-committed Christians—those whom Christ called "lukewarm" and threatened to "spew out of my mouth." Every church is imperfect; every church has been imperfect. For the church is nothing, more or less, than imperfect people. But it is imperfect people striving toward the perfection that Jesus offers.

Twenty years ago I found this poem:

"All our fathers have been churchmen,
nineteen hundred years or so;
and to every new suggestion,
they have always answered, 'No.'"

The condition hasn't changed; we have always had a status quo cult. But because change is so much more rapid in our society, resistance seems more pronounced. Yet, we are so anxious to get everything accomplished yesterday that we forget that resistance has always fought change.

Obviously in the midst of this turbulent society, the church will have problems. And its problems will be of new shapes, because its cultural and social milieu has taken so many new forms. But its imperfection and its problems do not make the church a useless instrument; rather, we realize, God has worked through ages of imperfect churches, and he is today blessing the efforts of thousands of churches throughout the United States and the world.

"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," we read in Ephesians. It is foolish to think that Christ's church would fail as long as it stands for Christ's principles—as long as it is, in fact, *his church*.

And I believe it is. I believe what the church is, what the church stands for, what the church is doing—struggling and working and sweating and caring for man, in Christ's name.

And I believe this is no time to let critics intimidate us. It is rather a time to recapture a clear vision of the nature of the church and its mission and move to fulfill it in the new world of the 1970s.

We are a year into the decade—a decade that could prove to be one of the most difficult, most confused, most agonizing 10 years in the history of man. It is a time of rapidly growing population, and rapidly growing moral and spiritual need. Churches can offer a new approach, a new insight, a new concept in their loving ministry and faithful witness in this day of challenge. They can, if they are willing to sacrifice themselves and truly, selflessly be Christ's body on earth.

December, 1970





MISSION IN A POLARIZING SOCIETY

December, 1970

A Compassion for People

"Then the King will say to people on his right: 'You who are blessed by my Father: come! Come and receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.' The righteous will then answer him: 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' The King will answer back, 'I tell you, indeed, whenever you did this for one of these poorest brothers of mine, you did it for me!'"

•Matthew 25:34-40

"As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

•Matthew 9:36

With love and compassion, Christ's heart went out to the wandering throngs, the people adrift in the confusion and difficulties of their times.

Throughout his life, Jesus showed little concern for personal comforts and his own physical surroundings. He owned no bluechip stocks, no fine home in the suburbs of Jerusalem, no full bank accounts. He owned nothing but the clothes he wore.

Nor was Christ much of an organization man; he had only a loose, unstructured following. And he never erected a building.

But he did establish a church, a church of people, a church that was, in fact, only people. For he focused on individuals throughout his ministry; day-by-day and hour-by-hour, he expressed his love for each and every human being.

As a result, Christ was accused of befriending the outcasts of society, of associating with known sinners. To this charge he pleaded guilty. He had come, he told his accusers, to offer hope to the hopeless, to offer love to the loveless, to offer life to men dead in sin. With such an attitude, whatever else his enemies could say about Jesus, they could not charge him with a lack of love.

In his compassion for all persons, regardless of race, regardless of class, regardless of circumstance, Jesus set the example. He taught us that when we shut out the influence of people of a different culture or language or color or experience, we deprive ourselves of an opportunity of enrichment, as well as deprive them of an opportunity for growth and selfhood.

Jesus simply loved people as people; and he was willing, over and over again, to take time to express his love. He had

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Like the flowers, Jesus was completely, refreshingly open and uninhibited. Again and again he freely took time to express his love—to fishermen and tax collectors, in tall-grass meadows and stuffy buildings. Christ was the fullness of springtime, the personification of new life and hope after a dreary winter stillness.

time for the businessman Zacchaeus and the fisherman Simon Peter. He had time for Nicodemus and for the Samaritan woman. His very life was an expression of the philosophy that "whosoever will may come," and a revelation that no circumstances of living, whatever it might be, bars God's love from man.

Jesus was refreshingly, completely uninhibited. He associated with anyone who willingly received his stream of mercy. Would God that we might discover Christ's openness, his liberty—his freedom to respect all people in their dignity as persons, created in the image of God and made for fellowship with God.

The author of Mark reports that "Jesus . . . preached the Good News from God. 'The right time has come,' he said, 'and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News.'"

And the news was indeed good! For the Son of Man had come to seek and to save those who were without an intimate relationship with God. "I have come in order that they might have life," Christ said, "life in all its fullness."

Jesus' primary thrust was to reconcile men to God, thereby paving the way for the reconciliation of men with one another, so that, through the clarity and purity of that vertical-horizontal relationship, man might discover abundant life.

Christ was unapologetic in this mission. He appealed to man's conscience, to his will. He urged man to turn from self-indulgence and accept God as Father and Supreme Source of mental and moral development.

Christ was sympathetic with daily, human needs. He revealed not only an interest in man's soul, but also his physical being.

If we are going to witness effectively today, we too must be concerned with the total person, whatever his problems, whatever his needs, whatever his hungers. In Christian compassion, we must help him solve the difficulties of his situation. By so doing, by convincing our fellow Americans we do care for them as individuals, we earn a right to be heard. And our message—the Good News of Christ—takes on new meaning and depth.

In prison, a depressed and doubting John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus. "'Tell us,' they asked Jesus, 'are you the one John said was going to come, or should we expect someone else?'" Jesus answered: "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing: the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor."

In expressing his concern, Jesus did not stop with the souls of the blind man or crippled man or deaf man or leper. He moved to help them with their immediate needs as well as their eternal ones.

The point is this: as proof of his Godhood, as proof that he was "The One," Christ offered visible, tangible evidence: sight where blindness had been, strong limbs where a cripp-

ple had hobbled, hearing where deafness had condemned a man to a silent world, a clean body where there had been ugly sores.

Christ clearly saw man as man and loved him. He did not separate spirit from body, soul from personality; he did not comfort one side of man while ignoring the other.

In every act, in every deed, Christ's object remained constant: to lead man to know God as Creator and Father and to help man find peace and purpose, meaning and value in life.

This should be our goal today! We are challenged to love all people, disregarding differences.

It is time for churches to lift their eyes and look on their whole community, seeing people all around as individuals whom God loves and to whom they are to minister.

A few years ago I was assisting in an evangelistic meeting in a western city; about half the town was Latin American, but there was no evangelical work among them. None.

I asked the pastor for a list of people that we might try to win to Christ; he had only half a dozen names, and there weren't any Garzas or Mendozas or Salinases or Rodriguezes. It was as if nobody lived in the town but Smiths and Johnsons and Joneses. And half the population was Latin American!

"I can't get the church to join me in starting a mission, and they won't try to bring the people into this church," the pastor admitted sadly. But the saddest part of all is that the situation isn't so unusual; it could have happened in any state in almost any city. I am afraid it occurs too many times in all too many areas.

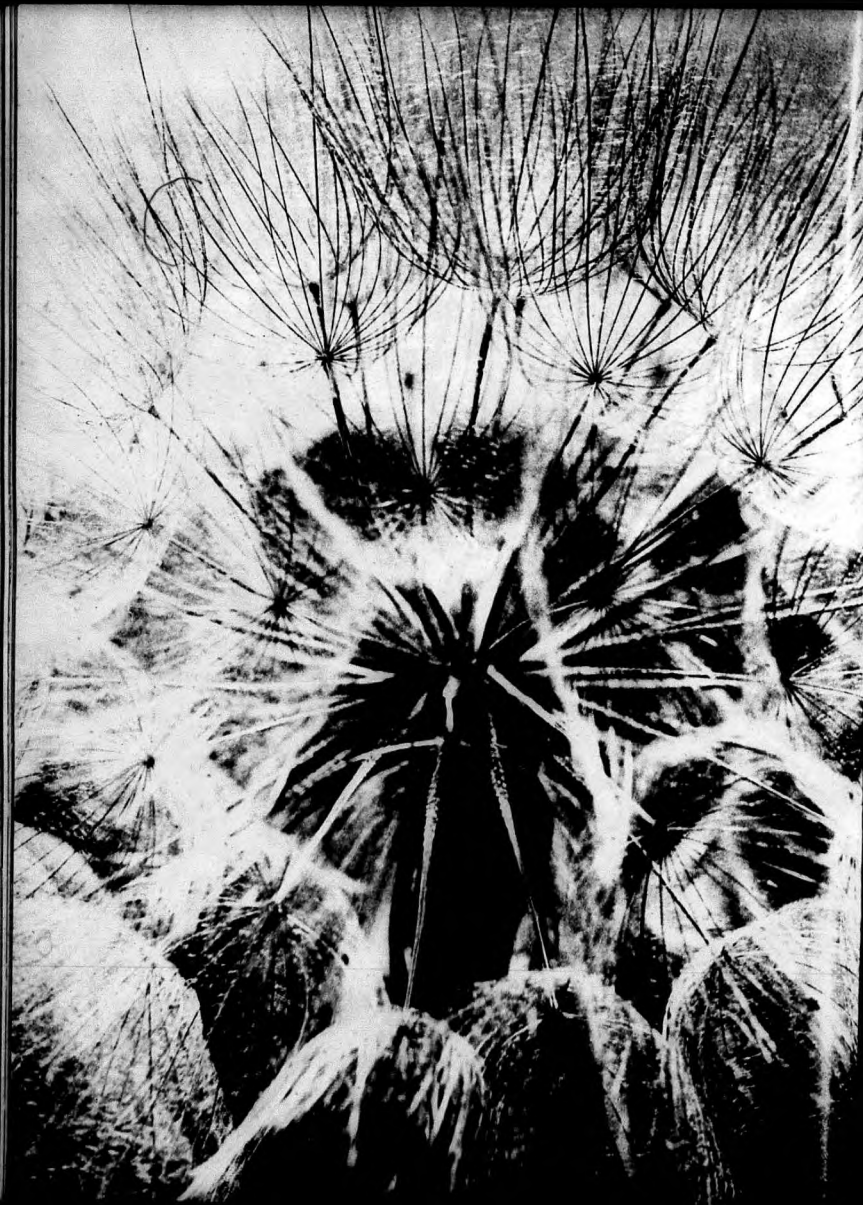
But, thank God, many churches are meeting such situations head-on; they are facing up to such community needs. They are reaching out to start a church, to begin a mission, to meet people they are not bringing into their church. They are, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Christ, crossing cultural and racial barriers. And they are able to say, as Christ did, "You know who I am by the work I am doing. See the blind and crippled and diseased and poor I have helped."

Some of us get hung up over helping people with housing and helping people get better streets and helping train them for jobs and helping remove the indignities that stand in their way. Some of us balk at conducting kindergartens, providing day care, giving literacy training. We just want to "preach the gospel"—to verbalize the Good News.

Jesus saw that his job was to help people in their loneliness and their need. This is what today's Christian social ministries are all about—going to people who are hurting and trying to alleviate their pain.

The appeal I make is that if we love, if we catch the meaning of Jesus' existence in our own lives, we cannot overlook any man. If we become "Jesus Christians"—Christians filled with the spirit of Christ—we'll try in his name to love all people and represent him in every relationship.





MISSION IN A POLARIZING SOCIETY

A Dedication to Mission

"... You will be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

•Acts 1:8

In this era of instant communication, our missionaries abroad are sometimes embarrassed by the piercing questions of alert young people. "Why are you in our land," they ask the missionaries. "When there are so many pressing moral and spiritual problems plaguing America? Why aren't you helping at home?"

If we wait until the United States' problems of crime and violence, drug and sex abuse, racial tensions and secularism are solved, we might never send another missionary to another land.

But our task, under Christ's great charge, is to tell our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria simultaneously about Jesus Christ. And to accomplish this by all means open to us: by word, by character, by conduct; by loving deed. Our responsibility is to the whole world.

The early church understood the universal nature of Christ's challenge. While Peter and James were serving in Jerusalem, Paul and Silas were in Philippi. The church in Antioch did not wait until every one in its city was a Christian believer before commissioning those first two missionaries.

So with us. We must carry the gospel to all people throughout the world, and to all the people within our land, as rapidly as we can, at the same time working on as many fronts as possible.

We in home missions realize, therefore, that we are but a part of God's plan to draw the whole world to himself, and to offer all mankind pardon and peace, meaning and fulfillment.

And we recognize that this is a time to strengthen our witness around the world, at home and abroad. I can remember when we only had 300 or 400 people serving in 15 or 20 countries. Today, in more than 75 nations around the globe, 2,500 Southern Baptist missionaries represent Christ. Through churches and schools, hospitals and other ministries to human need, they are pointing people of every culture to Jesus Christ.

Over the years, the Home Board has also strengthened its Christian outreach in the United States. More than 2,200 missionaries serve in language missions, Christian social ministries, pioneer missions, work related to nonevangels, work with National Baptists, rural-urban missions and metropolitan missions.

But the problem remains: the quality of Christianity in our own land determines the extent of our effectiveness in other lands. And no one at the Home Board believes we alone can

continued



In the 1970s, the Board will continue to assist in starting new churches. But the major emphasis of the work will not be on structures, but on people—black, white, red, yellow, brown. In fact, the attitude that "we can develop strong churches without buildings" has led to a policy that encourages investing primary resources in personnel rather than bricks and mortar. This "people policy," tried and found effective in the '60s, will be felt even more strongly in the future.



do all that is necessary to make the United States practice the Christianity it preaches so strongly.

The starting point in fulfilling our mission to America lies with each individual church. Today's call is for every congregation to take seriously its central task of representing Jesus Christ, of bringing people to a recognition of his teachings through all the avenues of loving deed and faithful word. Now is the time to commit ourselves to reaching all people, whoever and wherever they are, and to touching all lives in a significantly, deeply Christian way, through regular church ministries and special mission actions.

When the Southern Baptist Convention constituted two mission boards, one for foreign work and one for work at home, it was not evading responsibilities. The men of the Convention saw multitudes in their expanding nation and over the globe who needed Christ; they sought channels through which churches could fulfill their ministry to their own communities and throughout the world.

Today the mission boards—state as well as Foreign and Home—are merely extensions of the churches. And the responsibility of every church is still to do all it can to serve Christ in its face-to-face relationships, then undergird the mission boards to reach out still further to others.

From its inception, the Home Mission Board has been committed to evangelism. That commitment has not changed. As we enter the '70s, fresh efforts in the training of lay people for personal witness are being developed; several cities are now serving as testing grounds for new strategies, techniques and programs. You will learn more about these

efforts in the months ahead, as the Board's Evangelism Division, working in conjunction with state convention evangelism leadership, implements the findings.

To assist in starting new churches will be a major objective of the Board in the '70s, as it has been during the past century and a quarter. One exciting facet of Southern Baptist home mission work in the twentieth century has been expansion into northern states, beginning in the west, moving eastward to the central and Great Lakes states, then to the eastern and northeastern states. For 30 years, an average of two new Southern Baptist churches per week have been constituted in these states. Through the witness and ministry of these new churches, thousands of people have turned to Christ. The Home Board will continue to help hundreds of these churches annually with loans for buildings and grants to assist with pastors' salaries.

Involvement in ministries to disadvantaged peoples will continue at an accelerated pace in the '70s. Human needs seem to multiply in this fast moving time of dramatic change. Throughout the nation, from Philadelphia to Omaha, from Miami to Houston, disadvantaged people respond in love.

We have learned by exhilarating experience that we enlarge our opportunity of representing Christ when we provide ministries for youth and families in need, neglected minority peoples, the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the lonely. The challenge of the '70s is for larger church involvement in such ministries and for a growing number of vocational missionaries in this field.

continued

The '70s will call for enlarging attention to persons in special situations, such as the hospitalized, the imprisoned, and those in the military. Employed chaplains will provide the main thrust, but the need for volunteer chaplaincy ministries will require more service by pastors and lay people.

New efforts like chaplains in industry, resort missions and coffeehouses for youth will be needed, and doubtless still other innovative approaches will be discovered.

Our concern at every point, however, must be people—no methods. America is a kind of "united nations" itself. This nation of over 200 million people includes more than 20 million blacks and more than 35 million people of different language or cultural backgrounds. These people, representing more than one fourth of our national population, need to know God and his grace.

An effective witness in our complex day, then, must include a variety of ministries designed to communicate Christ to all people within the church's reach. It calls also for the largest possible financial support of missions through the Cooperative Program. One of the disturbing factors in the early '70s is the declining rate of gain in Cooperative Program support of missions at home and abroad, a gain that falls below the rate of inflation in the economy. If the mission boards are to make the advances necessary, we must have increased financial support.

We have a faith worth sharing, of that we have no doubts. We are committed, morally and ethically, to telling others of our faith. We recognize the faults of our churches, but love them deeply and work to strengthen them while they, in turn, strengthen us. And we understand Christ's compassion for man and realize that we, his followers, must try duplicating it in our own relationships with others.

Finally, we recognize that we are Christians at a particular place in a peculiar time. We see clearly the polarization that is occurring in our human family—we see the dividing shouting-silence that sets brother against brother, father against son, daughter against mother. And we know that God offers amid the loud voices a reconciling force to overcome the divisive elements and heal the polarization of minds that tears us away from each other—and him.

So, through our Christian commitment, we acknowledge our dedication to mission—to applying the healing, life-giving principles and precepts of Jesus Christ to our society in the 1970s.

I close with a call to prayer:

This is not our work; this is God's work. Jesus told his disciples on the Mount of Olives, "You will be filled with the power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." We must commune with God in prayer, yielding ourselves as his instruments at levels of such meaning that the Holy Spirit can work effectively through us. Thus we will be able to begin our inspired mission in the '70s: "You will be witnesses for me"—winsome, courageous, dedicated witnesses for Jesus Christ.

HOME MISSIONS

what will 1971 bring?

□ A year from now, when church leaders look back over the first year of the new decade of the '70s what will be the most important events and emerging trends? What can we expect in 1971?

We can only guarantee that some predictions will be wrong, but preparation of such a list may offer some churches suggestions for dealing with mounting tensions and anticipating imminent change. So here goes.

The most widely publicized single event of 1971 may be the categorical announcement by a prominent and widely respected ecumenical leader that the Consultation on Church Union (CCU) is dead. Because CCU is entering its second decade with a growing burden of handicaps, an announcement that it no longer is alive will be greeted with

From declining resources to a new emphasis on quality, today's events and emerging trends forecast dramatic changes for the religious community in the decade ahead

PART I: RELIGIOUS TRENDS
By Lyle E. Schaller

little surprise. Ardent supporters may accuse this outspoken leader of helping destroy the CCU; a larger group of ecclesiastical leaders, who have avoided public statements on CCU, may respond with: "Of course it's dead; everyone has known that for some time." Others will interpret this statement as a switch from support of CCU to opposition.

The most widely discussed news about church finance will not center on declines in benevolence giving, or comparatively modest growth in total giving. Instead, discussion will focus on rapidly growing financial burdens placed on local churches because of vandalism, arson and burglary.

Parish leaders will be startled by the proportion of local budgets that must be allocated to maintenance.

repair of damage, lighting parking lots, increased insurance and additional custodial help. An increasing number of congregations will find it impossible or economically infeasible to buy insurance from private companies, and several people will propose "denominational insurance."

The big news in religious publishing will be the flood of books and articles emphasizing the importance and potential of the suburban congregation. Instead of denouncing the suburban church as irrelevant or as overly concerned with members-only ministry, authors will point out the suburban church's latent capability to accelerate the pace of planned social change.

Detailed reports from the 1970 census will show a proportionately sharp increase in the black population and number of poor living in suburbia. In several metropolitan areas over one-half of the persons below the poverty line live in suburban communities.

Perhaps the strongest support for the new role of the suburban church will result from federal government and federal court attacks on zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and municipal policies that have barred both the Negro and the poor from thousands of suburban communities. The suburban church should stand up and be counted in these issues.

An important, increasingly visible long-term trend will be emphasis on quality. Churches have concentrated on quantity rather than quality, economy and efficiency rather than effectiveness, and activities rather than performance.

The emerging concept of an annual "social report" on the state of American society will begin to lead churchmen to replace traditional weight on numbers with new emphasis on quality and performance. For example, reports will not only include average Sunday School attendance, but also "what happened" to those in attendance.

As churches across the country examine their role and their responsibilities, an increasing number will decide that the most urgent task facing them is to serve as an agent of reconciliation in an increasingly polarized society. The gap will continue to widen between rich and poor, young and old, black and white, reformer and revolutionary, rural and urban. A growing number of congregations will conclude that their program has to be revised to enhance opportunities to be an effective reconciling force in the community.

One development of 1971 will be the dramatic emergence of a new militant power bloc: "Senior Power." Persons over age 60 will compose this new pressure group, which will use ultimatums, confrontation, picketing and politics to achieve its goals.

But the point is not creation of a new political lobby, rather the new tone of militancy of a comparatively gentle group of people. This militancy will be strengthened by growing support for enabling 17 year olds to vote and disfranchising persons over 65.

Ministry to the elderly will sharply change its approach. The traditional approach has been, "What can we do for those lonely and feeble old people?" In the 1970s, it will be, "How can we respond to their demands?"

For several thousand clergymen the most important development of 1971 will be emerging surplus of ministers. While this will not become a critical issue in most denominations until 1974 or 1975, in 1971 pulpit committees will be surprised at the comparatively large number of qualified candidates. The congregation paying a cash salary of \$8,000 to \$15,000 (plus housing, car allowance, etc.) will have a much longer list of qualified candidates than it did in the middle 1960s.

Change in the ministerial market place will clearly effect three groups of clergymen: (1) Seminary graduates stunned by limited choices open to them as they look for their first full-time pastoral assignment; (2) Pastors in the 28-35 age range who are ready for a move, but who will find relatively few attractive opportunities; (3) Men in the 45-50 age group who are convinced they are now at the peak of their ability, but who will discover that most congregations are looking for a "younger man."

In Christian education the most important development will be the tremendous success of television's "Sesame Street." This series, which was developed to help prepare deprived ghetto children for kindergarten, has won a wide following in white middle-class suburban homes. Distinguishing by its great variety of new teaching techniques and methods, "Sesame Street" has given its five-and-six-year-old viewers high expectations; after 50 to 100 hours watching "Sesame Street," they will be less tolerant of conventional Sunday School methods.

"Sesame Street" may be the critical factor in changing pedagogical-oriented Sunday School. Instead of continuing a style geared to teacher convenience and preference, the churches may be forced to respond to needs and interests of the child.

The 1960s were marked by a sharp increase in influence of individuals who urge churches to be actively involved in such issues as race, poverty, housing, peace, and ecology. To increase involvement, lobbies, interest groups, and caucuses were organized. Bloc voting on resolutions, appropriations, and the election of officers and delegates became commonplace. A "renewal caucus" (or

conference) could be found in almost all large denominations.

This marked a departure from traditional views of the decision making process in the denomination.

Traditionally, the annual meeting of the denomination on a state, regional or national level was an assembly of delegates who functioned as individuals. Politicizing the decision-making process changed this. Well organized interest groups which could produce bloc votes had a significant advantage over unorganized individuals.

This fact will result in highly political denominational meetings in 1971.

Groups organized along theological and political interests, by youth, by blacks, by the poor, by the small churches, by conservative laymen and by liberal pastors will present, in some areas, a new, and therefore somewhat frightening phenomenon; in other areas organization of participants is established tradition, and the contest in 1971 will shift to the local church and the choosing of delegates to the annual denominational meeting.

Finally, for more than 250,000 church members, most of them over 50 years old, the most important religious news of 1971 will be a local story that will receive practically no publicity, even in their own community.

This will be the news that "our church" is closing.

The list of churches closing in 1971 will include over a thousand small rural congregations that will disappear through merger, union, or dissolution; several hundred city churches—most of them white, a few interracial; and a growing number of black congregations. The combination of the continued suburban migration of members, financial cost of vandalism, and fear of crime and violence will cause scores of congregations in the central city to dissolve or to merge with congregations in a "better neighborhood."

The list also will include several dozen relatively young suburban congregations, founded in "high potential" neighborhoods in the early 1960s, but whose membership growth appears to have leveled off at 50 to 150 members.

Overshadowing these events and trends, however, will be the big news of 1971: more and more, through the work of dedicated individuals, God will be seen at work in this world. And Jesus Christ will be recognized as a "relevant" guide for a fulfilling, dynamic, exhilarating life today, as well as a hope for all of man's future.*

* Author is director of the Center for Parish Development, Evangelical Theological Seminary (United Methodist), Naperville, Ill.

what will 1971 bring?

PART II: TRENDS AHEAD FOR THE SBC

By T. B. Maston

□ Like trees caught in the fury of a winter thunderstorm, we Southern Baptists sway and bend. We feel the cold breath of a different tomorrow, as we stand and stare, with wind-watery eyes, into the future.

And even though our vision may be blurred, we see—or is it "feel"?—the turbulent forces than are moving us into the decade of the 1970s.

The trends that peek at us between the heavy clouds on our horizon are sometimes bad, sometimes good. Some are realities, others hopes; some are theological, others ecclesiological; some shared with other denominations, others distinctive. Some are reversible, others irreversible.

Perhaps we can begin by looking at present realities. Inevitably, culture has infiltrated and influenced Southern Baptist churches. Unfortunately, results of merger between Christianity and culture too often have been negative.

The predominantly secular, materialistic nature of our culture has led us into the "numbers racket," in which success is measured by statistics. But can any spiritually oriented institution or program be accurately judged by "head-count"?

The worldly pride that premeates our culture has also led many of us to build elaborate, beautiful sanctuaries and to provide bigger, more prestigious institutions, more to improve our standing in the community than to glorify God and serve mankind.

Responses to race problems illustrate another way culture has affected churches. Those who ignore the situation or rebel against it—rather than attempt progressive change in attitudes, programs and procedures—have based their approach on cultural, not Biblical, influences.

In the future, we must recognize the danger inherent in becoming so identified with the culture that we lose all power to challenge and lift it.

We must also avoid an attitude that is unresponsive to the culture's problems and torments, in order to influence the culture in Christian ways.

In the past, cultural pressures have brought "soci-

These faces may represent the best—and worst—of the SBC's future. Struggles to overcome prejudice will hurt the outreach of too many churches in the 1970s.



cological Christians" into our churches. But in an increasingly pluralistic society, attracting new church members is more difficult.

This may be one reason for the statistical decline in Southern Baptist life—a phenomenon we share with other Christian groups, including Roman Catholics. Only the sects—the "Third Force" in American Christendom—have withstood decline.

Local churches, particularly older and once stronger ones, have been hurt by the decrease in numbers (and, consequently, financial support). Baptist congregations, standing somewhat between traditional Protestantism and the sectarian fringe, have not experienced the same decline. But the rate of increase is slowing, and most growth is in new areas.

The membership and attendance declines have led many churches to reexamine their mission and methods. "Have we missed the boat somewhere?" they ask. "Have we majored on minors and minored on majors? Have we properly understood the nature of the church? Have we kept balance between the human and divine natures of the church? Do our church members understand that the church is both gathered and scattered, that it is anywhere they are?"

In reexamining the nature and function of the church, Southern Baptists are realizing that the church is God's, not man's. It is Christ's body in the world. And they are seeing that membership with no class or color restrictions is fundamental.

Reexamination has forced Southern Baptists to reconsider their historical position on regenerated church membership. As we enter the '70s, more and more Southern Baptists are asking if membership has been taken too lightly; if in anxiety and competition for numbers, they have admitted many who have not had a genuine conversion experience; if "saving faith" has been correctly interpreted?

Answers to these questions may require churches of the '70s to tone up membership rolls through discipline and periodic cleansing, as well as examining prospective members—especially children—more carefully.

After all, when we can find only about seven or eight million of the 11 million members we claim, it may be time for a "purging."

Closely related to this devaluation of quantity and reevaluation of quality is the renewal movement, which will increase in the 1970s.

When change is suggested, many Baptists' theme song becomes "I Shall Not Be Moved." Our unusually conservative attitudes affect every aspect of our work. For years we have debated a name change: "southern" no longer represents us; we are national. But so far, our traditionalism has defeated every attempt to change our name. The struggle over a new name will continue in the 1970s.

Two additional movements will inevitably affect many aspects of Southern Baptist life: the horizontal movement from the country to the city and vertical movement from economically poor and underprivileged to middle and upper class. While creating

continued

opportunities, they also threaten us if not properly handled.

Movement up the economic ladder is inevitable. Yet movement away from common laboring people will threaten our denomination. In the future, we must honor the small church as much as the large, the poor church as much as the rich.

Our institutions, particularly our colleges and hospitals, are in trouble. As we seek desperately needed financial aid, we will have to settle the government-aid question: accept federal money and keep our institutions alive and vigorous, or let them die (or become second-rate institutions) from monetary starvation?

Perhaps, however, Southern Baptists will decide to reduce the number of institutions in order to keep them alive and effective. We are badly overinstitutionalized; we need to close some institutions, give away or sell others. Surely this is a logical way to avoid compromising basic principles of church-state separation.

In addition to trends related to culture, the local church and the denomination there are theological currents that will affect all of us.

Generally speaking, Southern Baptists are theologically weak, their narrow dogmatism revealing uncertainty and frustration. They feel their faith threatened when they cannot intelligently defend it.

As Southern Baptists move up educationally, culturally, and economically they will be less theologically isolated. They will become better acquainted with and more influenced by contemporary theological trends. This will be particularly true of young people and most teachers: college, university, and seminary. The '70s will see a theological gap develop between the teacher and the layman and/or average pastor, who do not keep up with theological developments.

In the '70s, Southern Baptists may become less conservative. The appeal that Southern Baptists are conservative theologically has been used to gather southern people who have moved North, East, and West. As more people in those areas become Baptist, the theological climate may change.

It is doubtful that Southern Baptists are in danger of a theological split. We have very, very few theological liberals. We have more who are "liberal" in their ecclesiology and/or their social perspective. What we desperately need to develop in the '70s is a social liberalism to couple with our basically conservative theology.

We also have few ultra-conservatives, or fundamentalists. Because we are basically and largely conservative, and because there are more extremist ultra-conservatives than liberals, we will be threatened more by the far right than by the left.

Some of the extremes refuse to permit enough freedom within the denomination for those with whom they differ. Too readily they tack on the label "liberal" or "fundamentalist." We Southern Baptists must learn to differ in love. We need to trust others' honesty and sincerity while recognizing the possibility that they might be right and we wrong.

Southern Baptists tend to quickly and sharply limit freedom of thought and expression. This stems partly from the threat of new insights to a faith not well grounded; but some fear of freedom, particularly freedom for teacher or scholar, expresses constant, though possibly latent, anti-intellectualism.

Freedom must be limited, but primarily by a deep sense of personal responsibility and by truth itself. We need more freedom to search for truth. After all, we have not yet discovered all the truth the Lord has for us. We have the promise of the continuing leadership of the divine Spirit.

If we do not permit enough freedom for men to open the doors that challenge us, we will impoverish the life and work of our denomination in the '70s. Also, we will lose some of our most creative minds, while producing very few of the outstanding teachers, preachers and statesmen that our churches and our denomination dreadfully need.

A pervasive and significant trend among Southern Baptists is the move from "sect" church to a churchly type. The sects—minority groups with little at stake—have tended to separate themselves morally, spiritually and physically from the world's evils. Naturally they have stressed negative aspects of the Christian life, have maintained a high degree of sharing within the group, and have stressed personal rather than social morality.

In contrast, the churchly type has usually attained some prestige, tends to identify itself with the world, and has a deep sense of responsibility for the world. The emphasis is primarily on positive rather than negative aspects of the Christian life. The sense of mutuality within the group is lessened, and the stress is on social rather than personal morality.

For some time, Southern Baptists have been moving from the sect to a churchly type denomination. Southern Baptists' increasing concern for social issues and problems, accompanied with a concern for the total man and the world in which he lives, is a logical, overt response to this trend.

But all of our people have not accepted the shift to a total ministry to the total man. The continuing controversy concerning evangelism and social action is not unhealthy if we respect one another and not question the motives of those who differ. This situation offers the greatest danger of polarity arising among Southern Baptists.

Time alone will tell which trend will become predominant. Meanwhile, may each of us react with wisdom to the competing and conflicting trends. Our reactions will largely determine the future of our churches and our denomination. May we be understanding of and patient with those with whom we differ. May we work persistently to bring about the changes that we feel are needed. May we seek the mind of Christ.

Victor Hugo's advice is valuable for Southern Baptists in the '70s: "When you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake."

Mason is retired professor of Christian ethics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Tex.

Chaplains One-Day Conference

The conference is held in cooperation with Southern Baptist theological seminaries for pastors, ministers, missionaries, students, chaplain candidates and all interested in the Christian ministry.



GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY
Mill Valley, Calif.
February 9-11—H. I. Hester Lectures, February 9-12
Conference Leader—George W. Cummins, Director
Chaplain Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia



MIDWESTERN SEMINARY
Kansas City, Mo.
Thursday, February 11—H. I. Hester Lectures, March 9-12
8 A.M. to 7:45 P.M.
Conference Leader—Richard W. McKay, Assistant Director
Hospital Chaplaincy, Chaplains Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia



NEW ORLEANS SEMINARY
New Orleans, La.
Thursday, January 21
8 A.M. to 7:45 P.M.
Conference Leader—Willis A. Brown, Associate Director
Chaplain Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia



SOUTHEASTERN SEMINARY
Wake Forest, N. C.
Thursday, March 18
8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Conference Leader—Lowell F. Sodeman, Assistant Director
Industrial Chaplaincy, Chaplains Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia



SOUTHERN SEMINARY
Louisville, Ky.
Thursday, March 25
8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Conference Leader—Alfred Carl Hart, Assistant Director
Institutional Chaplaincy, Chaplains Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia



SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY
Fort Worth, Tex.
Tuesday, February 16
8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Conference Leader—William L. Clark, Assistant Director
Military Personnel Ministries, Chaplains Commission, Home Mission Board
Atlanta, Georgia

CHAPLAINS DAY will be observed at each of the seminaries in the morning chapel service.

LUNCH OR DINNER to be served in the seminary cafeteria, Golden Gate dinner, 6 P.M., Tuesday, February 9.

INTERVIEWS for those interested in the chaplaincy. Members of the staff of the Chaplains Commission will be present at the seminaries to interview those interested in the various fields of the chaplaincy. They will be present on the day of the conference and until noon of the following day.

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Leadership Section

Thomas Fenner Curtis: The Rejected Leader

By A. Ronald Tonks

Perhaps the most misunderstood and forgotten of all the leaders to serve the Home Mission Board was Thomas Fenner Curtis. Curtis, born in England in 1815, was the son of a prominent Baptist minister who immigrated to the United States and served Baptist churches in Georgia and South Carolina.

Curtis became a pastor in Georgia in 1838, serving there until he was invited—largely because of his scholastic ability—to pastor the prestigious First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

In 1845, with 14 other messengers, he represented Alabama at the organizational Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, Ga. At the convention, he was elected to the Board of Managers of the first Domestic (Home) Mission Board.

In 1849 Curtis became professor of theology at Howard College (Samford University) then located in Marion, Ala., while serving as recording secretary of the Domestic Board and secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. The next year Curtis' first book, *Communion*, widely influenced Baptist life.

When Russell Holman, Board corresponding secretary, resigned, Curtis was asked to replace him. Curtis began vigorously and seemed to invigorate the lethargic organization. An able administrator, Curtis recommended three progressive steps:

1. All missionaries were to meet annually to review the year's work.

2. Baptist ministers and churches interested in home missions were urged to raise money to support the work.

3. Missionaries and churches were to use the monthly magazine, "Home and Foreign Journal," to publicize and encourage regular support for domestic missions.

In the first year of Curtis' full-time work, a dramatic number of Baptist state conventions and associations chose to cooperate with the Board. His pleas changed from constant appeals for financial support to requests for workers and suggestions for locations for new work.

By 1852, Curtis had led the Board to a pinnacle of success. The work was expanding and receipts had reached a new high. He further led the Board to "project" mission work into needy areas, such as the new state of California. The Board willingly entered upon new projects, but still considered its major responsibility to supply missionaries to newly settled areas of the Southwest.

Curtis led the Domestic Board to establish its first permanent headquarters at Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, Ala.

Internal tensions within the Domestic Board emerged in 1853. Its Convention report stated that Curtis had been nominated as corresponding secretary, but declined; Joseph Walker had been elected. A motion passed expressing regret at Curtis' departure, but no public details were given for the sudden change of leadership.

The reasons are vague. Despite the success of home missions, tensions between Board members and Curtis had become increasingly strained. Curtis was "an able preacher, and a profound and elegant writer," but at times moody and unpopular.

The Board asked Curtis to withdraw as corresponding secretary because it did not consider him effective in raising funds to sustain the work. Afterward some members believed they acted hastily, but once the decision was made, it was not recalled.

Curtis became professor of theology at the University of Lewisburg (later Bucknell). He published in 1885 "The Progress of Baptist Principles." He remained in Lewisburg until about 1867 when he apparently moved to Boston. He died in that city in 1872.

The tenure of Curtis with the domestic (Home) Mission Board was important for he began the first systematic planning patterns for mission work in the United States. The inability of Curtis, however, to relate effectively to Board members caused its downfall. Early in its history, the Home Mission Board recognized its responsibility was not to antagonize Baptists, but to lead them successfully to claim "Our Land for Christ."

Tonks is assistant professor of history at Indiana Central College, Indianapolis.

HOME MISSIONS

"Extend Now"

by Loyd Corder

Southern Baptists have nearly 35,000 churches, about one for every 5,971 people in the nation. This is an extremely small ratio when compared to the one to 5,200 figure in 1930 and the one to 3,730 in 1889. Had we kept the 1889 ratio we would now have 53,500 churches—and even this would be an insufficient number.

Because of the quantities of people living in new housing areas and grouping themselves by new life styles, Southern Baptists must begin churches on a larger scale, with greater variety or we will, in our day, disobey God and fail his people.

A favorite method for church extension has been for a self-supporting church to buy a site, build a structure, transfer some of its own members, constitute the new church and underwrite its expenses until the new church can assume them.

Usually we encourage churches to give technical sponsorship where the association, state convention, and/or Home Mission Board provides help for property and operation. Denominational resources assist in establishing about five percent of new churches, and there is always the risk of injuring the spirit of self-sufficiency of the new congregation or of obligating it so heavily that the church begins to approach people with the deadly goal of economic survival rather than of spiritual ministry.

Clearly we must have an adequate plan that has the promise of success where these approaches do not. This plan must produce a broad scope of desirable results for the participating church and the people it serves.

The plan must be practical. It must enable persons to use familiar methods to work in today's churches and

with present denomination resources and structures.

This is the kind of plan we are proposing. It is a church sponsored, people-reaching, Bible-teaching, evangelistic, church-strengthening plan in which willing people without special training use simple methods to minister to their own neighbors in a way that involves them in an existing church or a new one.

In this plan each church organization does its own work naturally and easily without adjustments. Also associations, state conventions, and Southern Baptist Convention agencies provide assistance through normal procedures.

The Bible study fellowship is the basic element of the Southern Baptist church extension plan. A Bible study fellowship is two to ten people studying the Bible once a week in a home, office, store, institution or elsewhere. It is led—not taught—by any person who is willing to gather a group, read a short Bible passage plus a brief commentary, and put before them three or four questions to be discussed, one at a time, in terms of the experiences and understanding of the persons present.

A Bible study fellowship may continue for a month, a year, or more. Success is not in keeping the fellowship alive but in starting enough new ones to offset normal losses. Each fellowship should be kept small and vital. New ones may spin off from old ones as members of one become leaders of others.

The extension activities director of the Sunday school should divide the church territory among helpers that can each one enlist active or inactive



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37



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members, or even unchurched people to lead enough Bible study fellowships to permeate his assigned area.

The second element in the Church Extension Plan is the community event. This is a special event to which the people of the community are invited. It may be a musical or dramatic presentation, or an art exhibit. It may be a series of events such as a day camp, vacation Bible school, formal studies, or revival services.

Community events can cash in on the interest and concern already developed by Bible study fellowships, and help bring the participants to the sponsoring church or, if needed, draw them together into a new congregation.

Organized activities is the third element in the church extension plan, eventually leading to the birth of a new church. It may begin in the most simple form of weekly backyard Bible clubs, weekday graded Bible study, or a Sunday school. These can involve all kinds of innovative ministries to people's known needs. An organized work may continue for a while to meet a temporary need. It may be continued indefinitely in its initial form. Also it may provide the foundation for a needed church type mission that can grow into a new church. A newly organized work will be strengthened by continued Bible study fellowships and community events.

The association's involvement in extension efforts serve to strengthen its churches and speed the establishment of new ones. The association's missions committee, Sunday school, church training, church music, W.M.U., Brotherhood, church library and recreation organizations should take active roles. Through its bulletin and regular meetings the association can call attention to items in Southern Baptist Convention and state convention publications, interpret the plan and obtain formal commitment of churches to it. The association can also provide leadership training and consultation.

State conventions should participate, attempting to make churches and associations aware of Extend Now. They should seek to interpret the plan to associational leaders and engage them in the effort.

Southern Baptist Convention agencies have already participated in the development of this church ex-

tension plan. They have consulted with state convention executive secretaries and other leaders to seek their commitment to it. They will continue by all possible means to make churches, associations, and state conventions aware of Extend Now and to assist them as they participate in it.

Extend Now is a good, challenging, biblical, practical plan for Southern Baptists to act now on their profound belief that men need salvation in Christ, that we are ambassadors for him, and that the mission of churches is to the world rather than to themselves. ■

Corder is acting head of the Division of Missions.

Work With National Baptists

By Julius Avery

Every association needs an associational committee to work with National Baptists. The nature, purpose, and possible projects of such a committee are outlined below:

NATURE/ The Associational Baptist Joint Committee of National and Southern Baptists requires each member to be personally committed to Jesus Christ and to understand and accept his responsibility to exemplify "agape" love towards all human beings.

In the ministry of reconciliation, this kind of commitment and concern is essential to bring about Christian solutions to problems in human relations. Obviously, every member of this committee, as a Christian, should have an open and receptive mind. Only with members like this can the joint committee help Baptists find, accept, and follow God's will in all areas and relationships.

It is highly improbable that any member of a newly formed joint committee will, at the beginning, know enough about his task. If, however, everyone recognizes that this committee is attempting one of the

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most challenging tasks in our society today, each member will learn from others and from outside sources.

This committee should exemplify the "righteousness which comes from God" (see Romans 10:2,3; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 6:33, R.S.V.) and should be able to lead other Baptists to practice that righteousness of God which shows no partiality.

PURPOSE/ The joint committee should lead Baptists to first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. It is strange, indeed, that we have no record of any considerable body of Christians ever making a serious and complete corporate effort to follow implicitly the divine directive in Matthew 6:33.

Second, the committee should move forward to promote better race relations, to project the glory of God for all men, regardless of color or nationality.

POSSIBLE PROJECTS/ The alert, aggressive joint committee may develop several programs. Some may be accomplished in a short time, others may require years. In some suggested projects, the joint committee may need to enlist only pastors, in others, women of the churches, in others, men, and in others, young people.

Not all suggestions are to be attempted at once, of course. Each joint committee will exercise its own judgment as to which projects it will select, and how it will involve Baptists in implementing them.

The joint committee may also perform projects not mentioned. Baptist principles of freedom, autonomy and cooperation, when properly balanced, will care for all procedures of the joint committee.

Projects for Baptist Associations

1. Get acquainted with the leadership (moderator, missionary, etc.) of the National Baptist district associations in your area.

2. Hold a get-acquainted meeting with your associational leaders and their counterparts among National Baptists.

3. Survey National Baptist churches, programs and physical facilities. (Make this a joint survey if possible.)

4. Organize a small group on Baptist affairs within your city or association and plan occasional joint meetings.

5. Encourage joint simultaneous revivals, world missions conferences, and surveys.

6. Start an extension unit for in-service ministers in your association.

7. Invite National Baptist leaders and pastors to special speakers.

8. Survey needs for institutional services and new missions.

9. Plan joint clinics on various phases of church work.

10. Promote use of National Baptist student workers during summer months.

11. Promote Vacation Bible schools, summer camps and kindergartens.

12. Encourage exchange of pulpits among pastors.

13. Study the population trends of Negroes in your association(s).

14. Emphasize Baptist unity and fellowship on Race Relations Sunday, the second Sunday in February.

14. Make an effort to know and understand special problems affecting race relations in your association.

16. Encourage your association to develop a cooperative work with National Baptists.

In participating on the joint committee, each member should be prayerful, seeking divine guidance. If everyone follows New Testament principles, on one will "lord it over" another; everyone will be brothers in Christ.

We all need, therefore, to leave each other freedom enough and room enough to think and act under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

W. A. Criswell is director of work with National Baptists, Third Baptist Convention, Jacksonville.

Happenings

Recently appointed missionary associates include:

Mr. and Mrs. Joe DeLeon, Mission, Weatherford, Tex.

Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Godinez, Primavera Mission, Big Wells, Tex.

Derrick Hickman, Jr., Weekday Ministries, 23rd and Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

Lloyd W. Jones, Chillicothe Indian Mission, Newkirk, Okla.

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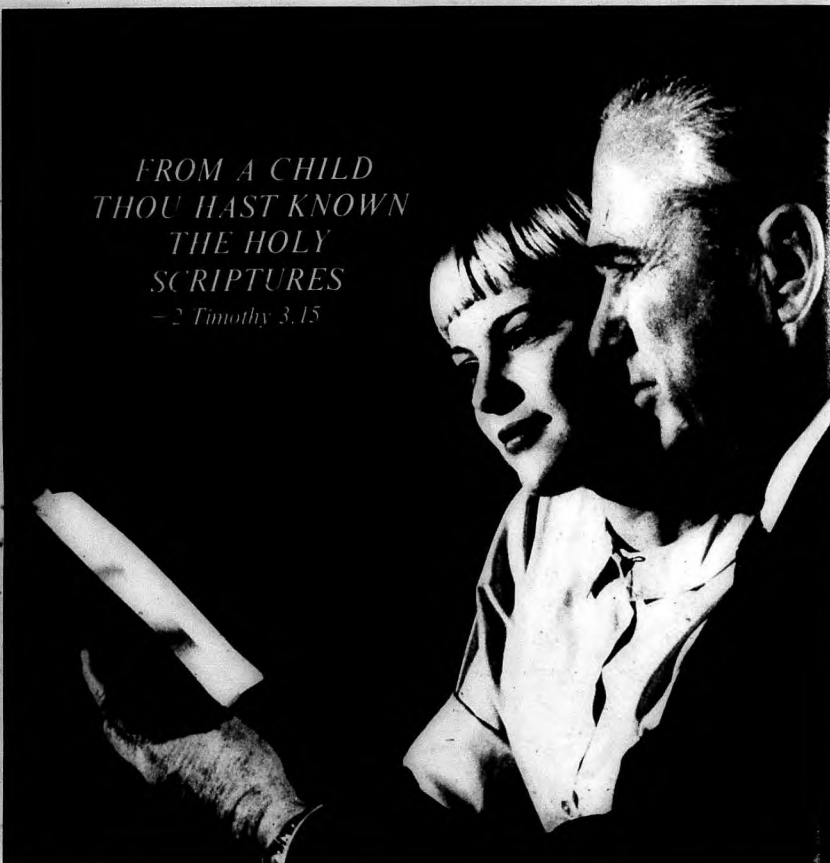
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Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin F. Martin, Regional Missionaries of the Department of Work with National Baptists, Winnfield, La.
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall W. Moore, director of Christian Social Ministries, Indianapolis, Ind.
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel H. Rupp, Spanish Mission, Granbury, Tex.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Thomas, director of Christian Social Ministries, Birmingham Baptist Association, Birmingham, Ala.
Cephas Wong, Chines Church, San Antonio, Tex.

When Bob Tremaine gets a city rolling, it's like striking a bell with a wedge hammer. You hear an immediate GONG! And the whole place reverberates for months.

Tremaine is pastor-director of the Greater Worcester (Mass.) Baptist Ministries, and his latest "bell-ringer" was a summer music festival and street revival in a Puerto Rican neighborhood.

The music festival featured the New Christian Singers, a youth group from Bethany Baptist Church, Dallas, Tex. Under director, Don Jackson, the choir performed the folk musical, "Life," each night for a week.

After each concert, Tremaine preached.

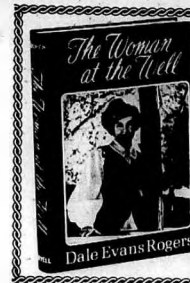
The musical drew up to 500 people on the church's parking lot. In addition, the New Christian Singers appeared on area-wide television three times and appeared before paraplegic and cerebral palsy patients at a state hospital; they also sang on the city hall steps, drawing a large crowd.

As a result of the Music Festival, more than 115 people committed their lives to Christ.

Under language worker Jim Wright, Greater Worcester Baptist Ministries also reached out into the Puerto Rican section of the city, a district which is plagued by a heavy traffic in drugs, especially heroin.

Rudy Sanchez of First Mexican Baptist in Dallas preached the first service—in the same spot which had seen two murders only two days before. Tremaine's wife did chalk drawing and summer missionaries sang songs in Spanish.

The second street revival drew more than 200 people and two decisions were made. Again, summer missionaries sang hymns in Spanish and Jim Wright brought the message.



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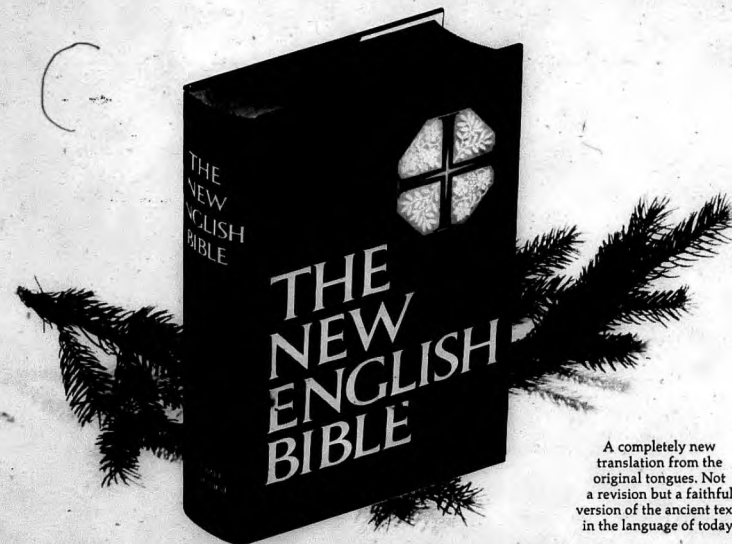
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Chaplains Prayer Calendar

Jan. 1: Dale D. Burton Jr., Ohio, Army; Herman M. Kincaid, Tex., Army; William H. Mattox, S.C., Air Force; Andrew A. Bratcher Jr., Tex., hospital. Jan. 2: Emmett Solomon, Tex., institutional. Jan. 4: Carl B. Case, Tex., hospital; Aubrey Neal, Ark., Navy. Jan. 6: Edward Carl Middleton, S.C., Navy. Jan. 7: Harold F. Mengev, Kans., Army; Wendell T. Wright, Va., Army; Harry W. Clifton, Mo., institutional. Jan. 8: Milton Lamar Trawick, Ala., Navy; Vernon Wall, N.C., hospital; Ralph E. Medlock Jr., Army, Ga. Jan. 9: LeRoy C. Pearce, Mo., Army; George M. Coaker, Ala., hospital; Robert R. Whiteside, S.C., Air Force; Douglas Dexter, Miss., institutional. Jan. 11: Charles E. LeClair, Okla., Army; Chester L. Smith, Ky., Air Force; Jay D. Peterson, Fla., Navy. Jan. 12: Harvey L. Lilly Jr., La., Navy; Jack C. Randles, Ga., Army. Jan. 13: John F. Rasberry, Ala., Air Force. Jan. 14: Marion K. Kelly, S.C., Army. Jan. 15: Delton Collins, Ga., Army; John T. Collins, S.C., Navy. Jan. 16: Marvin O. Gardner, Ala., Air Force; Albert B. Parsons Jr., S.C., Air Force; Joseph W. Vetter, Ky., Army; Harold D. Wright, La., hospital. Jan. 17: Lewis E. Alfred, Miss., Navy. Jan. 18: Cammie D. Arrendell, Tex., Air Force; Roy A. Raxter, Tenn., Navy; John M. Dickson, Fla., institutional. Jan. 20: Robert F. Gunter, Calif., hospital; Joe E. Luncelord, Miss., Air Force; William H. Rend, Ky., Air Force. Jan. 21: Robert W. Collard, Ark., Army; Clarence L. Hopkins, Okla., Army; Homer E. Keen Jr., Miss., Navy; J. V. Porter, Okla., hospital. Jan. 22: John T. Goad, Tenn., Navy; Newton Hardin, N.C., Air Force; William E. Patton, N.C., hospital; Hugh R. Kinsey, Fla., Air Force; Robert L. Morris, Va., Army. Jan. 23: Bell Reeves, Ala., Army; Dewey D. Underwood, Tex., hospital; William Marvin Stricklin, Mo., Air Force. Jan. 24: Paul R. Line, Fla., hospital; Glenn Jude, W. Va., Air Force. Jan. 25: Nathan L. Robinson, La., hospital. Jan. 27: Harry C. Hubbard, Okla., hospital; Willis L. Saunders, Okla., hospital; Deyo J. Williams, N.C., hospital. Jan. 28: Roy Riddle, N.C., Air Force; Frank A. Renfro, Okla., hospital. Jan. 29: Roy E. Williams, N.C., institutional. Jan. 30: James F. Agnew, S.C., Navy. Jan. 31: Charles George Campbell, Ga., Army; Pat H. Davis, Ala., Army; Richard Hopkins, N.C., hospital; David M. Jost, Okla., institutional; Frank A. Rice, La., Air Force.



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MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I mentioned a few weeks ago in a memo here that hundreds of men and women had found at Clear Creek the answer to their special needs for Christian training. I mentioned too, that literally hundreds of these men and women are now serving churches in almost every state of the nation.

In a sense we are in the transporting business—sending out well trained Christian men and women to serve these needy communities around us. It is exciting to know that reaching from the hills of Pineville, there is a strong, steady influence of Christian leadership at work all over the country.

We listen and we watch with thankful hearts the reports as they come in from "our students." They speak clearly of what God is doing through them in the varied ministries to which the Lord has called them. They have gone into areas where the need for spiritual leadership is desperate and have found a mission field waiting for a harvest.

Never have we felt more the intense need to continue this unique training program. There are so many areas in this land of ours where communities are without pastors, and trained workers that we find each day, renewed inspiration from the knowledge that Clear Creek Baptist School has a vital part in carrying out the Great Commission of Christ to areas far outside our campus.

We are inspired too, by the many who have committed themselves to the prayerful support of this work. If you would like to receive a free subscription to our publication, THE MOUNTAIN VOICE, just drop us a postcard with your name and address.

D. M. ALDRIDGE
President

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ON THE COVER

A hard stare of alienation reveals one aspect of the polarization in today's society. Young withdraw from old, black from white, rich from poor. As Christians, we must work to heal the divisions that separate men.

PHOTO BY GEORGE TORNEY

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Letters

Louisville

I would like to express my appreciation for the coverage that Louisville received in the September issue. . . . We do feel that we have a tremendous ministry here and that your magazine made an excellent presentation of it.

I am currently serving on the staff at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as a professor in the social work education department within the School of Religious Education. I am also director of field education for the social work program. I hope to use September HOME MISSIONS in my course here at the Seminary.

Anne Davis
Louisville, Ky.

Just finished reading September issue. . . . Of course, it is hard to view this issue objectively. However, I do feel it is a splendid issue. It's good to have someone come in from the outside and kind of give an overview and total perspective to our work. Everyone I've talked to is really pleased with your coverage and approach. I am deeply grateful for providing this opportunity to us to tell the story of our work.

Lowell Lawson
Louisville, Ky.

As a Christian career man in the U.S. Navy I am continually challenged by your "now" articles each month. I thank God for writers who are not afraid to step outside traditions of the past and give us timely direction for the problems of today and the future.

After reading "Learning to Live With Acceptance," in the September issue, I could wait no longer to give you a "Well Done." As the author quoted his pastor, "Only God can love downward." I thought how many of us do this without even thinking. In the military the saint to sinner approach does more damage than good, but when one uses the sinner to sinner route without loving downward, progress can be made.

Charles E. Keith
FPO New York

Breaking Barriers

. . . I wish to tell you of the struggle our church had in breaking

through the traditional barriers to arrive at a mission project. . . . On Sunday evening . . . we had a question period regarding the two sermons of that day. . . . There . . . one member asked "How can our church show love for our brothers in our community?" Immediately one of the young school teachers . . . informed us of the need . . . for a . . . mission project in the Negro area. . . . Someone suggested we offer a VBS program. But, due to fear of community pressure, no VBS was held that summer for the Negro children. A church of another denomination had tried to have a VBS program in the summer of '68, but due to community ridicule it failed. . . . Having come to the place of recognizing the need and the hindrance, I . . . saw that our people needed to understand that the question was one of being faithful to the demands of the gospel rather than maintaining cultural traditions. So, I began preaching a series of sermons from I and II Corinthians, emphasizing the fact that Christianity is often radically different from the cultural setting in which it is to be practiced. The people were once again spiritually sensitive, and by spring . . . they were willing to offer a VBS program for the children regardless of what others thought or did.

The two WMU circles . . . met jointly to consider the project and were unanimously in favor. When contact was made with the pastors and teachers of the Negro churches, Zion Rock Baptist, Bethel Baptist, New Salem Baptist, they expressed not only desire but enthusiasm. These churches had not provided any VBS for their children in the previous five years, and when asked "Why?" They said they did not know how to organize it or have enough money to buy the teaching materials. We told them we would organize it and pay the expenses of the VBS if they would provide the facilities and teacher's aids. The Negroes had expressed some hesitancy about meeting in a "white church," even though they were better equipped, because they feared there might be reprisals if word on us. Understand this, they feared

for us, not for themselves. We had never understood this before, and we were humbled to realize that they thought of us before they thought of themselves. In a very cooperative spirit, Zion Rock Baptist Church, in the heart of the Negro community, offered the use of their facilities.

The ladies from the Negro churches and our ladies joined together to walk from house to house, explaining the VBS program.

In the meantime, I attended the SBC in Denver. A matter that had been bothering me was solved at the Convention. I wanted the SBC to adopt a sound biblical position on "race," and thanks be to God, they did that very thing. I could not wait to return home to write a report in the town paper and inform the populace of our community that a mission project in the Negro community was the Christian thing to do and that the SBC encouraged such efforts. The point which made the greatest impression, as some later told me on the street . . . was, "that as Christians we should more diligently seek to cultivate good relationships between individuals and groups who differ racially from us through joint projects for human betterment and Christian witness in church and community. . . ." Such a statement also convinced the Negroes that we were not just being nice, but that we were genuinely interested.

When the school opened, to the amazement of everyone, there were 101 children and 31 workers. By Friday we had enrolled 132 children. . . . There was some fear of discipline, since the facilities were inadequate, but the children were so eager to learn, they did not disturb the class.

Word had spread through the area and some of the local distributors of ice cream, soft drinks, and cookies furnished the refreshments.

Commencement services were attended by approximately 200 children and parents.

Everyone left with the spirit of Christ in his heart, and with a greater vision of the work that can be done in the future through such joint redemptive efforts.

Our church practices an "open door" policy for membership, but as yet, we do not have any Negro families. Some will visit occasionally, but have not expressed a desire to join. We earnestly desire that the Lord will add several Negro families to our church, because we believe they can offer us something as well as our being able to offer them something.

Jerry Haughton
Portageville, Mo.

Summer Notes

As an alumnus of the HMB summer missionary program, I'd like to say "Right on!" to the things done with that program last summer (October/HM).

By the end of my summer (1952), I suppose I may have turned in better "numbers" or more "notches on my Bible," than did those students last summer who worked in the really innovative ministries. But, without depreciating my summer, if I were asked who was more deeply involved in the reconciling work of Christ in the world, I would have to answer that it was they, not I.

The reason is that it is just plain true, and it is just plain Biblical—some of our traditions to the contrary notwithstanding—that people are *not* "souls to be won." They rather are whole persons who must be respected in their wholeness, and who must be loved and helped, without condescension.

May God hasten the day when such an "instinct for humanity," writ large in all our Lord ever did or suffered, will not need to be defended among the people who claim to be, and mean to be, a New Testament people.

Robison B. James
Richmond, Va.

You and your staff are to be congratulated on the excellent October issue of HOME MISSIONS. You did a great service to the students who served as summer missionaries. . . . Thank you . . . for all your efforts to tell the story of the Student Summer Mission Ministry.

Emery Smith
Atlanta, Ga.

As the Prosecution Rested

Thank you for printing the letter from Brother John H. McCoy of Nucla, Colo. I admire your courage to print such an inspired letter even when it so effectively condemns one of your staff.

Brother McCoy is to be commended for not being influenced by those minor qualities of Mr. Hullum's life such as love, gentleness, goodness and faith (Gal. 5:22 & 23). He has the obvious talent of getting right to the weightier matters of the law, such as length of a man's hair!

I agree with Brother McCoy's emphasis on secular education. I think it's a sin the way Texas (secular) beats Baylor (sacred) in football every year. I'll bet we could take them in a Sword Drill, unless they had some Baptist on their team who couldn't afford to attend a Baptist school.

As to his suggestion regarding the length of the dresses worn by summer workers I would suggest the Home Mission Board issue a uniform. The Catholics have done this for centuries and look what they have accomplished.

Keep up the good work, Brother McCoy!

Norman Godfrey
Memphis/Tenn.

In January Home Missions

'Tis the season to be repossessed, and while dodging the creditors (tra-la-la-la), we are going to get practical about Christian social ministries. We've spent thousands of words telling people to get involved, in Christ's name, in the pains of others—from hungry stomachs to hurt pride. But we've seldom told anyone how to go about it. January HM remedies this and, while making its specific "Immodest Proposal," shoots daily-like holes in those old ploys, "I-don't-know-how" and "I-don't-have-any-talent." So rest-uneasy; after next month, you'll be out of excuses (unfortunately, so will we). Happy new year anyway.



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An excellent gift for those who have recently lost loved ones and are seeking strength in time of sorrow. Contains factual accounts of how families have lived through the loss of sons in Vietnam or children in car accidents. **\$3.75**

The Bible's Secret of Full Happiness by Joseph F. Green

"Liberate and affirm yourself by discovering your true identity as a child of God." Here is an inspirational, personal testimony approach to Christian living in the light of biblical teaching about such things as faith, love, and hope. **\$3.95**

How High Are the Stars! by William Cannon

An astronaut, released by NASA after a radiation accident gives him a year to live, makes a covenant with God to live this year entirely within the will of God. Fiction. **\$4.50**

All the Parables of Jesus by Robert L. Cargill

An inspirational interpretation of the parables and how they relate to life today. Abundant illustrations from everyday experiences. **\$2.95**

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It is possible to maintain a balanced view of work and the home and still be an effective Christian. Here is helpful advice and encouragement from one who has done so. **\$3.50**

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