

LIGHT

Facts And Action In Applied Christianity

An Occasional Bulletin In Christian Social Ethics

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CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
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FOY VALENTINE, EXEC. SECRETARY-TREASURER

ROSS COGGINS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Friend:

If there is anything Southern Baptists are generally agreed on, it is that we do not need another denominational publication cluttering our desks!

This newsletter is not intended as a publication in any formal sense whatsoever. It is, rather designed as an occasional mimeographed piece to carry pertinent and relevant matters in the field of applied Christianity to a very specialized audience -- state and associational Christian Life Commission (or Committee) members.

Numerous requests have come across my desk since I came to this work in 1960 for some such medium of communication. Not until the coming of William M. Dyal, Jr. to the Christian Life Commission as Director of Organization has such a project been possible. It is now with thanks to him and a prayer to God for its usefulness that we send forth this first issue.

Sincerely,

Foy Valentine

Executive Secretary-Treasurer
The Christian Life Commission of the
Southern Baptist Convention

RECORD CRIME RATE

Religious News Service reported that 1963 was well on its way to establishing a new all-time record in the crime rate. FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover announced that the number of crimes known to police during the first half of 1963 topped the same period a year ago by nine percent. The greatest increase in crime has occurred in the suburban areas. A final report will be released next July.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. CITIZENSHIP SEMINAR

Election year and the national capitol will be the context for a Christian Life Commission Seminar on Christian Citizenship to be held March 23-25. Invitations have been accepted by more than 75 Southern Baptists from a cross-section of life and ministry.

Among the speakers and discussion leaders will be Dr. John Bennett, Union Seminary President; Dr. Penrose St. Amant; Hon. Brooks Hays; Dr. Dan Grant, Vanderbilt Political Science professor; Dr. William Crook; Dr. James Ralph Scales; Dr. Jimmy Allen; and Dr. Theodore Adams.

ASSOCIATIONS ACT

Exemplary actions were taken in recent months by two Associations of Baptists. The young Metropolitan New York Baptist Association resolved that the churches of the area be urged to establish a Christian Life Committee at the church level. To find and implement ways of expressing Christian convictions in racial and other moral issues, and to exercise a ministry of reconciliation within their geographical areas without distinction of race were stated areas of purpose for these church committees. The Madison Baptist Church of Madison, New Jersey. Howard Hovde, pastor is following the resolution and has formed an active Christian Life Committee.

The Mt. Vernon Association of northern Virginia voted to sponsor a major seminary-workshop in the spring of 1965 to study the major current issues and their implications for Baptist witness. The Association is asking the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission to aid in the planning of the workshop. John R. Halsell, III, pastor of Vienna Baptist Church is chairman of the Associational Christian Life Committee.

Georgia:

In conjunction with a careful study on crime and penal systems in the state, the Georgia Christian Life Commission made a thoughtful statement on capital punishment at the annual convention, Savannah.

The report read in part, "Georgia has put to death more people in the last 30 years than any other state in the United States. The total number put to death between 1930 and 1959 was 352. Thus, we led the nation in taking the life of those who came into our courts. In 1959, half of those executed in the United States were put to death in Georgia, California, Florida and Arkansas."

Following a concise scriptural interpretation, the report included impressions gained from a study of the pros and cons of capital punishment. "Our present penal system in which capital punishment is a method of dealing with extreme violations of law would have to be revised if capital punishment were abolished. There must be a way of dealing with the members of society who are unable or unwilling to live within a society of law and order."

The report concluded that while an official of the state may pull the executing switch, the ultimate responsibility for the execution rests upon the citizens of the state. "If we as a society are to rise above hatred and murder, we must carry out our belief in the worth and dignity of man by eliminating capital punishment. The state should seek to save life by rehabilitation rather than to take life by execution."

Kentucky:

Kentucky Baptists adopted a resolution urging the churches to vote for integration. The resolution commended those churches which already have demonstrated a "willingness and desire to accept persons solely on the New Testament basis of their faith in Christ without regard to racial origin."

Mississippi:

Meeting in Jackson, the Mississippi Convention voted to set up a Christian Action Commission with membership to be elected in the 1964 convention. The Commission

will be charged with work in the areas of the alcoholic and narcotics problems, moral and social problems, church-state relations, Christian citizenship, and Christian home life. A budget and plan of work will be voted on in 1965.

North Carolina:

By a vote of 517 to 362, North Carolina Convention messengers supported a resolution of its Christian Life Committee calling for abolishment of capital punishment in the state. The action had been asked for two years in succession. Spirited debate on both sides of the issue preceded the vote. W.W. Finlator of Raleigh, termed the death penalty a "relic of the medieval age."

A LIVING SPEECH FROM A DEAD PRESIDENT. . .

"What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slaves. I am talking about genuine peace - the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, and the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children - not merely peace for Americans, but peace for all men and women - not merely peace in our time but peace in all time. . . Peace need not be impracticable and war need not be inevitable. By defining our goal more clearly, by making it seem more manageable and less remote, we can help all people see it, to draw hope from it, and to move irresistibly toward it. We are not helpless before that task or hopeless of its success. Confident and unafraid, we labor on - not toward a strategy of annihilation but toward a strategy of peace."

--President John F. Kennedy in his address, "The Strategy of Peace."

READABLE

STRENGTH TO LOVE, Martin Luther King, Jr. Admirers and critics alike should read the philosophy and spiritual pilgrimage of the most influential man in the United States in the crucial area of race relations. A revealing behind-the-scenes look at TIME's "Man of the Year" and his beliefs. Published by Harper and Row.

QUOTEABLE

A National Lottery?...

John Hurt in the Georgia Baptist CHRISTIAN INDEX editorializes: "Rep. Paul A. Fino, New York Republican, is reviving his crusade for a government lottery. Those inclined to dismiss him should remember New Hampshire recently approved one on a state basis. The Representative introduced into the 'Congressional Record' a tabulation showing \$3.7 billion went into parimutuel betting last year. He claims it is the total for the 24 states which permit such gambling. He also claims that \$6 billion goes right into the filthy pockets of the gambling crime syndicates. We can't dispute the figures nor do we believe he can prove them. That's the issue. Legalizing wrong doesn't make it right. The Representative would find himself in much better company if he would crusade for law enforcement. We haven't wiped out murder and drunken driving but neither have we heard this justified as the reason for legalizing them..."

CHRISTIAN INDEX, November 28, 1963

Look At The UN...

During a Christian Life Commission sponsored Seminar on the United Nations in New York City, Editor Richard Owen of Tennessee commented: "To some people the United Nations can do nothing wrong. To others it can do nothing right. Really we made some attempt to get the UN on it... In a sense, the UN is a kind of mirror held up before the world. If we don't like what we see in it, we must realize it's the reflection of the political, economic, social, cultural reality obtaining in all nations whose flags fly at even length before the UN..."

We as Christians look at the UN in the light of the cross. We should view it in awareness of what might be the only alternative - the mushrooming cloud of nuclear destruction. Certainly we should not write off the UN as useless, even if it seems nothing but talk. Talk is better than misadventure. While debate goes on, there is still possibility of coming to some agreements that can lessen international tensions and help turn the enormous cost of armaments to more constructive purposes."

3

The Church and Technology...

"The Christian Church has a concern for technology and the new forms of society that it brings... Technology offers the human race opportunities never known before. We can end the age-old struggle against starvation and poverty. We can stop much of the drudgery, pain and frustration that have haunted mankind... But Technology brings risks to match its opportunities. Technology combined with greed, indifference, and ignorance victimizes some men and threatens us all."

Consider a few of the big questions Christians must lay on the conscience of men these days. (1) What shall we do with our vastly increasing production? Shall we manipulate people, by the arts of psychology and advertising, to consume more and waste more in order to keep the economy going? (2) What shall we do with men who are displaced by machines? (3) What shall we do about the world's safety and hunger? Technology creates weapons that endanger the whole human race. Increasing the number of lives far more easily than the quality of lives, it crowds us closer together without teaching us how to live together. (4) How shall we locate ethical responsibility in this highly organized world?

"The church does not meet the emerging new society with ready-made answers for its urgent problems. In part, the vocation of the church today is to trouble the conscience of society with persistent painful questions so that men in the seats of power cannot be complacent in their affluence..."

THE INTERCHURCH NEWS, December 1963

Evangelicals and the Race Revolution...

"The identification of conservative religious leaders with conservative social and political attitudes has become a strong indictment of the evangelical position... The conservative Protestant Church had better get involved in this Negro revolution or face inevitable judgment by the Negroes and youth of today and the historians of tomorrow."

--William Anderson, Jr., CHRISTIANITY TODAY, October 25, 1963

Association Christian Life Committee Guidebook, 12 pages, Christian Life Commission publication, free. Splendid aid in activating and projecting programs of work.

AN OPEN LETTER

I plead guilty to speaking out against the objectional salacious and obscene literature on the newsstands in Pine Bluff. I spoke out but--

--Only after years of remaining silent while studying the problem of salacious literature and the pros and cons of censorship;
--Only after reading the words of Pitirim Sorokin, eminent Harvard Sociologist who said: "The sham literature of our age is designed for the commercial cultivation, propagation and exploitation of the most degraded forms of behavior...It is pornography that appeals to the basest propensities of the 'worst of the beast.'...The world of this popular literature is a sort of human zoo, inhabited by raped, mutilated, and murdered females, and by he-males outmatching in beastiality any caveman and outlusting the lustiest of animals...Giving detailed descriptions of various techniques of sexual approach, and vivid scenes of kissing embracing, and copulating, and while brutally dramatizing rape and other sexual perversions, this pornographically illustrated pulp-literature demoralizes and dehumanizes millions of readers...All in all, this stuff has become omnipresent in our lives and everyone of us is incessantly and increasingly exposed to its deadly radiations."

--Only after reading the question posed by J. Edgar Hoover, "And what have we done to dam the flood of twilight zone material --vulgar and degrading trash--inundating so many newsstands across the Nation?"

--Only after considering the words of Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield that "it is clear that there must be a greater, expanded awareness of the seriousness and the demoralizing results of the wholesale distribution of filth to the children of this country if we are to deal with this matter in a completely effective manner."

--Only after I learned from Ethics Professor C.W.Scudder that "salacious literature and pornographic materials soon became the central matter for investigation when the special Senate committee undertook the task of determining the cause or causes of the rapid rise in juvenile crime. Poisoning of minds and the prostituting of emotions seem to have taken first place in undermining and corrupting the moral health of America, and this has been carried out, in the main, by the producers of salacious literature and pornographic materials."

--Only after seeing grade-school children squatting at the magazine racks of our newsstands poring over books and magazines, the covers of which blatantly headlined sadism, vice and perversion!

--Only after I read the statement of a nationally recognized literary critic, writing for New York Times who said of some of the books recently published (and of course sold globally) that they compared as far as literary merit is concerned with the "scribblings on the wall of public toilets."

Now dear reader honestly does it take a "literary critic of recognized capacity" (from a recent Commercial editorial) to judge the literary merit of "scribblings on the walls of public toilets"?

I'm for freedom--freedom of the press; "freedom to read." I am for the freedom of a man to eat out of the garbage can--but also in favor of a law which assures clean wholesome food served to school children. Is it wrong to be for a law like that???

I am for the freedom of a man to go swimming in a cesspool--but I am in favor of a law to protect the health of youngsters who swim in the city pool. Is it wrong to be for a law like that???

I am for the freedom of a person to read vile, pornographic filth reflecting the life of subsocial sewers--but I am in favor of a law to protect the impressionable minds of children against the influence of such pathological rotteness. Is it wrong to be for a law like that???

The editorial staff of the Pine Bluff Commercial has declared itself in favor of the freedom to print and publish without censorship and distribute without interference such literature as described above. I hereby declare myself to be unequivocally and unrelentingly against the same. I am against it as a man. I am against it as a citizen of the community. I am against it as a minister of a church. I am against it as a father of teen-aged children. As long as I live I will be against it and when I die I will be dead against it.

In the name of Almighty God I am guilty of being against the manufacture, distribution, sale and exhibition of salacious literature.

First Bapt. Ch.
Pine Bluff, Ark.

Sincerely yours,

Robert L. Smith, Pastor

(This splendid statement on salacious literature was first printed in the PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL. It may be reprinted.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS ON APPLIED CHRISTIANITY

Recommended by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention for use in Church Libraries, 1964. Without giving full approval of all that is said in all of the books listed here, it is felt that readers will find them helpful in gaining a better understanding of our Christian faith and life.

GENERAL

- Barnette, Introducing Christian Ethics (Nashville:Broadman Press,1968) \$3.75
 Gardner, Biblical Faith and Social Ethics (N.Y.:Harper and Bros.,1960) \$5.00
 Maston, Christianity and World Issues (N.Y.:The Macmillan Co.,1957) \$5.00
 Maston, The Christian In The Modern World (Nashville:Convention Press,1952,rev.1955) 75c
 Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 Vol. (N.Y.:Harper-Row,1960) \$4.70 in paperback for both vol. (Vol.1,\$2.95; Vol.2,\$2.45)

FAMILY

- Adams, Making Your Marriage Succeed (N.Y.:Harper-Row,1953) \$2.50
 Bowman, A Christian Interpretation of Marriage (Phila.:Westminster Press,1959) \$2.50
 Mace, Whom God Hath Joined (Phila.:Westminster Press,1953) \$2.00
 Scudder, The Family In Christian Perspective (Nash.:Broadman Press,1962) \$3.50
 Trueblood, The Recovery of Family Life (N.Y.:Harper and Bros.,1953) \$2.00

RACE

- Campbell, Race and the Renewal of the Church (Phila.:Westminster Press,1962) paper \$1.25
 Haselden, The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective (N.Y.:Harper,1959) \$3.50
 Hays, A Southern Moderate Speaks (Chapel Hill:The Univ. of N.C. Press,1959) \$1.00
 Marney, Structures of Prejudice (Nashville:Abingdon Press,1961) \$4.50
 Maston, The Bible and Race (Nashville:Broadman Press,1959) \$2.50; paper, 85c
 Maston, Segregation and Desegregation: A Christian Approach (N.Y.:Macmillan,1959) \$3.50

CITIZENSHIP

- Bennett, The Christian As Citizen (N.Y.:Association Press,1955) \$1.25
 Cullman, The State In The New Testament (N.Y.:Chas.Scribner's Sons,1956) \$2.95
 Geren, Christians Confront Communism (Nashville:Convention Press,1962) 75c
 Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society (N.Y.:Chas.Scribner's Sons,1932) \$3.95; paper,\$1.45
 Muehl, Mixing Religion and Politics (N.Y.:Assoc.Press,1958) 50c paperback.

DAILY WORK

- Boggs, All Ye Who Labor (Richmond:John Knox Press,1961) \$2.50 paperback
 McLellan, The Other Six Days (Richmond:John Knox Press,1961) \$1.50, paperback
 Oldham, Work In Modern Society (Richmond:John Knox Press,1961) paper \$1.00
 Trueblood, Your Other Vocation (N.Y.:Harper-Row,1952) \$2.00
 Ward (ed.), Goals of Economic Life (N.Y.:Harper and Bros.,1953) \$4.00

MORAL ISSUES

- Bainton, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace (Nashville:Abingdon Press,1960) \$4.75
 Beach, Conscience on Campus (N.Y.:Association Press,1958) \$2.50; paper, \$1.00
 Maston, Right or Wrong (Nashville:Broadman Press,1955) \$2.00
 Scudder, Danger Ahead (Nashville:Broadman Press,1961) \$3.25
 Tilson, Should Christians Drink? (Nashville:Abingdon Press,1957) \$2.00

THE AMERICAN FAMILY: A COMPOSITE PICTURE

47 million United States families	completed high school.
69 million children under 18 years of age	Half of all women in their early 70's are widows; only 1 in 6 males is a widower.
(one in 25 lives with divorced or separated parents)	Income: Lowest median family income is found in Mississippi; highest in Alaska, followed by California and Nevada.
Transient: almost half the population five years old and over moved in the five years preceding 1960 census.	--Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., December 30, 1963
Preparation: 3 out of 5 family heads have not	

RIDGECREST -- August 20-26

DATES TO CIRCLE IN RED

GLORIEDA -- August 6-12

Christian Life Commission Summer Conferences

SUBJECT: Christianity and Race Relations

A CHURCH TAKES INVENTORY ON RACE

What are the requirements for membership in our local church? Do we affirm a policy of open membership without regard to race, class, or ethnic origin?

Does the church have in its membership persons other than those from the majority group? If so, who are they and how did they come to join our church? If we do not have any members of different background than the majority, why is this so?

Does our church see persons in the neighborhood as potential for evangelization? Are any of them already members of the church? If the immediate neighborhood is all or predominantly of one racial group what consideration has been given to ways of broadening and deepening the fellowship through more inclusive experiences?

What is our local church doing in the following areas:

a. Making available information concerning racial and cultural relations through

- the church library?
- literature distribution?
- literature displays?
- audio-visual aids?
- reports?
- speakers?

b. Studying and interpreting the Christian basis and responsibility for moving toward inclusiveness in the church and racial justice in the community by means of

- regular study?
- fellowship groups?
- special study-action groups?
- the pulpit?

c. Providing opportunities for sharing in inclusive fellowship experiences

- through pulpit and congregation exchanges?
- through yoked congregational experiences?
- by bringing age-level groups together for worship, study-action, discussion of mutual concerns, recreation, work projects, special occasions, etc.?

d. Being sure that the philosophy of Christian education materials used, in the experience-centered aspects of the curriculum, and in the attitudes of the teachers reflect the Christian faith and the denomination's intention?

e. Studying the church's investments and properties to make sure they are non-discriminatory. Attempting to insure that companies from which the church purchases services have fair employment practices?

f. Working in the community through Christian witness to make the moral issue clear by

- supporting movement and legislation through racial justice in housing, employment, education, social welfare and health services, public accommodations, etc.?
- encouraging and supporting the laity in their witness and work in the community?

--S.Garry Oniki, SOCIAL ACTION, Sept. 1963

"The Things That Make For Peace"

Addresses delivered at the 1963 Christian Life Commission conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest are now available for \$1 from the Commission office. Included are addresses by Charles Wells, Carlyle Marney, Frank Graham, Charles Wellborn, Bill Pinson, Jimmy Allen, J. P. Allen, Bill Dyal and Lloyd Wright.

L I G H T
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