

LIGHT

Facts And Action In Applied Christianity

An Occasional Bulletin In Christian Social Ethics

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NEW YORK SEMINAR

Two hundred Southern Baptists descended on New York, March 28-30 for a highly stimulating seminar on "Christianity and World Issues." Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the seminar spoke to the key issues confronting man in today's world. The registrants represented a wide cross section of Southern Baptist life.

The speakers and their topics:

- "Christianity and World Issues: an Overview" -- Dr. George Schweitzer,
Professor, Chemistry Department, University of Tennessee
- "Christians Face Family Life in Transition" -- Dr. David R. Mace,
Executive Director, American Association of Marriage Counselors
- "A Christian Looks at a Warring World" -- The Honorable Harold E. Stassen,
Attorney at law
- "Factors in World Revolution" -- Dr. Roger L. Shinn, Professor of Applied
Christianity, Union Theological Seminary
- "Racism: The Special Problem for Christianity" -- Dr. George Kelsey,
Professor, Drew University
- "Christian Ethics and the Population Explosion" -- Dr. Richard M. Fagley,
Executive Secretary, Commission of the Churches on International
Affairs, World Council of Churches
- "The Christian Religion in a Technological Age" -- Dr. Samuel Miller,
Dean, Divinity School, Harvard University
- "The Role of Christian Missions in a Changing World" -- Dr. Baker James
Cauthen, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, The Foreign Mission Board of
the Southern Baptist Convention
- "The Role of the United Nations in a Changing World" -- Dr. John Stoessinger,
Author, Lecturer, Professor of Political Science at Hunter College,
Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in Political Science at The City
University of New York
- "Communicating the Gospel to a Revolutionary Age" -- Dr. Eugene A. Nida,
Executive Secretary for Translations, American Bible Society

TEXAS: LABOR AND MANAGEMENT VIEWS AIRED

An exchange of viewpoints between representatives of labor unions and representatives of management was suggested as being one of the most valuable contributions of the 1966 Christian Life Commission Workshop.

To have such differing viewpoints propounded before a Baptist group by men who are Christians is healthful, said Jimmy R. Allen, secretary of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The commission sponsored the workshop held last week on the campus of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

There was no question but that the conceptions of labor-management relations varied according to the position of the person involved. The question of the repeal by Congress of Section 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act generated a great amount of discussion between those attending the workshop and the men representing labor. This section allows states to enact "right-to-work" laws.

The discussions on labor and other matters pertaining to work came about by design through the theme of the workshop, "Christianity and the Workaday World."

Speakers discussed such subjects as the problems of leisure, business ethics, compassion for the needy, biblical insights into work, Baptists' historical relationship to the workaday world, Christianity and trade unions, and the challenge to Christians in the workaday world.

Interest in 14-B

Many of those who had come to listen got into active participation through their interest in Section 14-B. Much of the discussion periods where the labor men

were present was used in explanations of labor's position on the issue as those in attendance insisted on having it discussed. Texas has a right-to-work law, and most of those at the workshop seemed to agree with it. In fact, the labor representatives declared that Baptists are generally a management-oriented group.

On several occasions management and labor representatives served together as resource persons in discussion groups. These times gave opportunity for the differing viewpoints to be projected.

Martin Neill of Neill's Associates, Inc. in Midland represented management in a discussion group on the Christian Role in Labor-Management and on a panel. On the panel he was joined by Joe Coleman of Coleman, Ervin, and Ragsdale, architects and engineers in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Coleman addressed a Southwestern chapel service on the subject, "Ethics in a Business Society." The panel subject was "The Christian's Role in Labor-Management Relations."

Representatives of the labor movement in the discussion group were Edwin A. Elliott of Fort Worth, former member of the National Labor Relations Board, and Curtis Meade of Dallas, financial secretary-treasurer of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union of America, Local Union No. 111, Dallas. For the panel discussion Elliott was joined by Willard Barr, mayor of Fort Worth, president of News Printing Company, Inc., and publisher of Labor News.

T. B. Maston, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Seminary, was moderator of the panel and also a resource person on a discussion group on the Church and Leisure.

--Baptist Standard, March 23, 1966

ONE VIEWPOINT:

WORK

THE
NEW
MEANING
OF

In the past, work--whether seen as boring drudgery or as a hard challenging struggle--was absolutely necessary for survival. Since it required discipline--self denial, effort, and skill--it gave the man who engaged in it not only bread and butter but also a certain dignity, a sense of satisfaction, and perhaps meaning to his life. Work gave a man citizenship, it gave him the right to eat, it gave him an identity, it entitled him to the respect of his fellow man.

As if these positive values and satisfactions were not enough, since the Reformation we in the West have endowed work with religious significance as well. According to Protestant doctrine working out our salvation and doing work is looked upon as one and the same thing. For most of us today of course this explicitly religious interpretation of work has been lost, but we still tend to burden our work with the exaggerated importance that the religious interpretation of the Reformers gave it.

While in theory we continue to give immense importance to the value of work, industrialization has changed the nature of work so that our experience no longer fits the theory. For many men the difficult challenge of creative effort has been replaced by boredom, alienation and meaninglessness. Few of us work for ourselves and receive the direct satisfaction of achieving something and enjoying the fruits. The division of labor has been carried to such a high degree that the limited tasks we do perform seem unrelated to an economically significant end. Many are not producing necessities for human survival, but luxury goods and services which, through marketable, are trivial. The result of these conditions of industrial work are that many workers are frustrated and bitter. Some seek growth and satisfactions outside their work; perhaps more settle into a life of apathy. If this picture is exaggerated, I would at least insist that the intrinsic satisfactions most men find in their work cannot compare to the time we spend in it and value we place on it. In a society of severe economic scarcity such a situation might be tolerable. But in affluent America we do not need to sacrifice our human development in order to meet our vital material needs; we can afford to satisfy both.

In sharp disagreement with this position are those who claim that automation is radically different from anything we have known in the past, and that it is displacing workers so rapidly that the hope of full employment is an illusion. This challenge to the majority view implies not only disagreement about the facts of what automation is doing--but also a disagreement about values. Automation is seen not as a danger because it

(continued)

The New Meaning of Work - continued:

eliminates jobs, but rather it is valued precisely because it does eliminate jobs. Automation offers the possibility of freeing men from absorption in satisfying their material needs by productive work--it gives them the opportunity to concern themselves with other higher needs. The challengers of the conventional view insist that life is more than the abundance of our possessions. They submit that material goods and services are merely the foundation upon which the good life is to be built. If automation can assume more and more of the task of supplying this foundation, let us rejoice that men are freed to put their energies into political, educational, cultural and social activity.

Those who challenge the majority position recommend a more radical proposal for action. Instead of trying to achieve full employment so that all men may have an income and a place in society, they propose to break the traditional link between income and work, and provide a guaranteed annual income for all. It is suggested that an annual income of \$3,000 for each person would free all men from the necessity of working for a living. Persons could then choose voluntarily either to continue work at a job in order to increase their income above the \$3,000 level, or else not to work so as to pursue significant non-economic activities.

My proposal then is this: Establish a guaranteed minimum income for all, but instead of proclaiming a workless society, enlarge our understanding of work. Our traditional view that work is effort directed to satisfy the material needs of men is no longer adequate. Already an increasing number of jobs in our society are directed at serving the political, psychological, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual needs of men. Social work in past generations was a spare time activity of well-to-do ladies; now it is a profession with highly trained personnel. Many functions of paid government workers were in the past performed by men in their free time. In the society that can no longer afford an undereducated populace, to acquire a higher education for one's self is obviously a public service for which one should be paid. To organize or lead a block club or youth work or Great Decisions discussion group or a political precinct organization are all socially significant jobs that in a society of abundance should be considered productive work.

Questions of course immediately present themselves. For instance, precisely how are we to distinguish between work of social or cultural importance and other activity? How much and on what basis should men be paid for such work? What kind of machinery could be set up to distribute income so as to keep the disbursements responsible while still encouraging creativity? And equally difficult is the political question. How is the proposed revolution to be brought about? Unless this one is answered, even the best proposals are but utopian wind. To such questions my answer is this: These mechanical and political questions are important and must be dealt with. But the first challenge is to develop and communicate a contagious vision of the promise of the new technology for human life - and of a new kind of work that is concerned more with development of human beings than with production of things. -- Scott Paradise, Boston Industrial Mission, copied from Concerns for Christian Citizens

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: A recent magazine ad reads: "Wanted, men to work on nuclear-fissionable isotope molecular reactive counters and three phase cyclotronic uranium electro-photo-magnetic electrophotosynthesizers. No experience necessary."

POVERTY: "HEAD START" PASSES FIRST TEST

It seemed to be a good idea in the beginning - this Head Start program of 1965; good enough that some 150,000 children were expected to participate. As it turned out, over 2,000 communities served 561,000 children through the program. From across the nation have come enthusiastic reports of children glimpsing a new world, of parents responding to opportunities to help and be helped, of professionals and volunteers finding rich rewards in new dimensions of service.

The Head Start Development programs, through a variety of patterns, offered educational, health and welfare services to pre-school children of poor families. Emphasis in programming was on meeting individual needs, on helping to close the gap in experience between the children of poverty and those from more advantaged homes before they enter public school, on coordination of health, education and welfare services, and on involvement of parents.

Following up on the promising start made with this summer's projects, the Office of Economic Opportunity is now ready to assist with three kinds of Child Development programs:

- Follow-through programs including health, education, social service, and parent activities during the 1965-66 school year for the children who participated in HEAD START this summer.
- Full-year programs for pre-school children three years of age or older.
- Short-term programs next summer for children who will enter school in the fall of 1966.

These Head Start programs must be nonsectarian and non-discriminatory as to race, religion and national origin.

Applications will be accepted throughout the year. About 60 days should be allowed for approval of an application, or 90 days if the program will involve some pre-training of personnel. In a locality where there is a Community Action Agency for Economic Opportunity programs, application should be made through this agency. If no such agency exists organizations such as the following may apply directly to the Office of Economic Opportunity: public health and welfare departments, school boards, private non-profit organizations, colleges, charitable and religious organizations.

"An Invitation to Help Head Start Child Development Programs" is a 64-page illustrated booklet giving basic information about application, administration and programming; also listings of sources of funds which can in some cases supplement Head Start grants, printed resources and complete addresses of Office of Economic Opportunity regional offices from which information and assistance in planning can be secured. The booklet may be ordered from: Project Head Start, Community Action Program, Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D. C. 20506. Also available from the same source: "How to Apply for Head Start Child Development Programs" (16 pp. Pamphlet).

THE CHURCH: SERVANT OF HUMANITY

There are heights and depths in humanity beyond our imagining. Victor Frankl, who now sits in Freud's chair in Vienna, was for three years in a concentration camp. Most of the time he did slave labor. "There on that testing ground," he said, "we witnessed comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints." Then he concluded, "Man is that being who created the gas chambers of Auschwitz. He is also the being who entered those chambers upright with the Lord's Prayer on his lips." This is the unconquerable dignity of man which has a right to our enduring respect no matter how low he has fallen.

Our Lord even respected the sacred right of every soul to reject him. He gave every man an ultimatum but also an alternative. You remember the Samaritan village that rejected him. So furious were James and John at such an indignity that they said, "Let's call down fire and burn up this village." But Jesus said, "You know not what Spirit you are of." Jesus humanized every crowd he ever touched. When a woman touched him in a throng he said, "Who touched me?" His disciples were often in bustling crowds that meant little to them. They were amazed and said, "In all this crowd you want to know who touched you?" But Jesus didn't want anyone to get lost in the crowd. He would not have anyone to be treated impersonally.

-We so easily get submerged in the crowd and lost in the outside world, but if we allow people to get lost inside the church that is tragic. Every person needs a citadel where he can be esteemed, a citadel where his selfhood is respected, where he is not lost as a person. Can we be a church which is such a citadel?

-- Charles A. Trentham, First Baptist, Knoxville
(Excerpts from Sermon Delivered to Southern Baptist
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