

# LIGHT

## Facts And Action In Applied Christianity

*An Occasional Bulletin In Christian Social Ethics*

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### SUMMER CONFERENCES

#### "TOWARD A CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF SEX"

Dr. David R. Mace, noted Christian authority on family life, will address the Christian Life Conferences at both Ridgecrest and Glorieta in August. The Glorieta dates are August 11-17, and the Ridgecrest conference is August 25-31. Dr. Mace will speak and lead discussion morning and evening on the following topics:

"Sex in the Bible"  
"Sex in Christian Tradition"  
"Sex in the Modern World"  
"Sex and Love"  
"Sex and Marriage"  
"Sex and Parenthood"  
"Sex and Society"  
"Sex and Sin"  
"Sex and the Christian Life"

Just off the press --

#### THE GAMBLING MENACE

Published by Broadman Press

Lectures delivered at the 1965 Christian Life conferences at Glorieta Baptist Assembly inspired this volume. The lectures included those of the Southern Baptist theological seminary professors in Christian social ethics. The last chapter of this study is devoted to an unusually comprehensive plan of action which provides information for a total response to the gambling menace. Available at your Baptist Book Store, \$3.95.

## "TO OBEY OR NOT OBEY THE LAW?"

A cartoon depicts a figure marked "Civil Disobedience" looking pious with arms folded as if he wouldn't hurt a flea. Behind him is a jail, however, with bars sawed off an open window through which three vicious characters are escaping: "Crime," "Violence," and "Bloodshed."

A cartoon is a kind of parable, often exaggerating to make a point. In this case the point is that when disrespect for the law becomes respectable some very undesirable side effects are apt to follow. One person disregarding or refusing to obey the law may be annoying, obnoxious, or even dangerous. But civil disobedience as a way of life puts us only a step from anarchy.

Leaving aside for the moment the causes producing rioting, looting, and the wanton destruction of life and property, it is obvious that such outbreaks cannot be tolerated if society itself is to survive. Indeed, it is only because the mass of people are decent and law-abiding that the lawbreaker's arts are effective. If everybody did what he does society would become a jungle in which he himself, particularly if he belonged to a minority group, would stand little chance of surviving.

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And yet we are on unsure ground when we condemn all forms of civil disobedience as if they were equally evil. How strange it sounds coming from Americans whose nation was born in acts of civil disobedience! Remember the Boston tea party when some fellows dressed up as Indians and dumped a shipload of other people's property into the harbor.

How strange it is coming from people whose religious heritage includes the

heroic acts of people who refused to bow the knee to Baal or burn incense on a Roman altar while swearing allegiance to the emperor. Let us Christians not forget those early apostles who, commanded by the authorities to cease preaching, replied, "We must obey God rather than men."

If someone quotes the Apostle Paul as saying, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God," it may be asked whether he would have said that about Hitler in the thirties or about Russia or Red China in the sixties. Remember that the government finally executed Paul as a criminal.

The inspiring chapters of church history were largely written by men and women who for the sake of conscience refused to obey the law. There was Bishop Polycarp, burned at the stake in 156 A.D., before a howling mob. The official pleased with the old man: "Now what harm is there in saying 'Lord Caesar,' and in offering incense, and thus saving thyself?" But he replied: "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he hath done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?" So they burned him.

And when you are remembering those who have performed civil disobedience do not forget Bishop Ambrose of Milan who put his own body between the church and the emperor's desire to assume the right to perform priestly rites in it.

Don't forget brilliant John Hus, burned at the stake in the 15th century, or Bishops Crammer, Ridley and Latimer in England in the 16th. Or Felix Manz drowned in Zurich, or Balthasar Hubmaier with his tongue torn out.

(continued on page 3)

## WORLD ISSUES SEMINAR SCHEDULED FOR PACIFIC NORTHWEST IN 1967

Seattle or Portland will be the scene of a major seminar on the theme, "Christianity and World Issues," March 31 - April 1, 1967. Eugene Bolin, State Student Director for the Oregon-Washington Baptist Convention is the chief planner. The Christian Life Commission of the SBC is cooperating. A featured speaker will be Dr. George Schweitzer, scientist-theologian of the University of Tennessee.

More than 1,000 participants are anticipated. Numbered among them will be collegians, pastors, laymen, and university officials from many major denominations in the area. Southern Baptists of the Pacific Northwest will comprise the largest number.

## WAR ON PEP PILLS

Gun-toting government agents are about to do battle with merchants in "pep pills," "goof balls" and such hallucinogenic (hallucination-producing) drugs as LSD. Arming its agents for the first time in history, the Food and Drug Administration plans a national drive against the illegal spread of the dangerous drugs. Field offices will be centered in New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City and Los Angeles. Anyone caught illegally selling or possessing the drugs--even though they have not passed over state lines--will be prosecuted. National alarm over the widespread use of the drugs, particularly among young people, is behind the campaign. But the FDA says it will be several months before actual results can be measured.

## TO OBEY OR NOT OBEY THE LAW? (continued from page 2)

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The list is endless. It is almost like calling the roll of the saints. There were the little hounded congregations of Separatists and Baptists who had to leave England because the law made it impossible to worship. And there were those who continued to suffer for civil disobedience in the new world. In Culpepper, Virginia, they will tell you of the imprisoned preachers of 1766 who were jailed because they refused to obey the law against unlicensed preaching.

And while we are at it let us remember old John Bunyan, sitting in Bedford Jail for 12 years, writing while there the immortal "Pilgrim's Progress," and saying defiantly that he would sit there until moss grew on his eyebrows before he would violate his conscience.

Ah; someone will be saying now with indignation, how could you associate these great heroes with the cynical, snarling, beatnik, dirty, robbing, looting and assaulting mobs of Harlem, Rochester, Watts, and Detroit, etc. etc." That is just the point, isn't it? We cannot afford to make the mistake of classifying all civil disobedience as the same thing. We tend to do this much too much. We generalize. Everything is black or white. We put everybody either in one group or another.

Can we arrive at any religiously-oriented guidelines for our attitudes toward this problem in our time? I think we can. And I want to tackle that in this column next week.

-- L. D. J., July 10, 1966, Asheville Citizen-Times

## "RESOLUTION ON VIETNAM"

The General Board of the National Council of Churches reaffirms the principles underlying its Policy Statement and Message to the Churches on Viet Nam, adopted on December 3, 1965. We desire to underline the following paragraph from the Message to the Churches:

"The reason Christians have a specific responsibility to speak and to criticize is that they have a loyalty to God which must transcend every other loyalty, and they belong to one family with all other Christians on all six continents. At the same time they seek to be loyal citizens of their nation."

In the light of recent developments, we

1. Affirm that reconciliation and peace with justice must be our immediate as well as our long-range objective.
2. Express our gratitude for the peace offensive of our Government, the utilization of the United Nations' good offices, and all efforts to strengthen collective responsibility for the achieving and maintenance of peace.
3. Support the increasing emphasis upon the economic development, social and political rehabilitation of the war-ravaged people and communities of Viet Nam.
4. Urge support in the form of personnel as well as funds for programs of welfare and compassion carried on in Viet Nam by the churches.
5. Approve the public debate and examination of policy as evidenced in the current Senate hearings.
6. Protest the increasing reliance on military methods by all parties to the conflict and the resultant preparation for a longer, widening, and more intensive war.
7. Recognize that there are risks involved in the submission of the Viet Nam dispute to the collective judgment of, for example, a reconvened Geneva Conference, but affirm that these risks are outweighed by the dangers and dead ends of unilateral action and escalation.
8. Urge our Government, working through the United Nations as well as other channels that may be open to it, to continue with a sense of urgency to do everything it can to assure that all parties to the Viet Nam dispute, including the National Liberation Front, come to the conference table.
9. Join in prayer for all who suffer in Viet Nam and extend our profound sympathy to those who are making sacrifices. --Adopted by the General Board of the National Council of Churches, February 24, 1966.

## "TORTURE"

Atrocities in wartime are almost entirely impossible to discuss. The concocted atrocity stories of World War I vintage conditioned Americans to disbelieve such accusations in the future; and then the future proved they were mistaken in their disbelief: man was capable of perpetrating such horrors. The charges of American complicity in the use of torture in Vietnam therefore confuse us. We do not want to believe them, and the fact that they are generally made by advocates of American withdrawal makes us suspicious. On the other hand, we have seen enough violence in our own land--clergymen killed, children bombed, even our President murdered--to secretly suspect that the stories could be true--which is all the more reason to want to forget the whole problem.

Unfortunately, the evidence is too strong to be ignored. A variety of sources, The New York Times and Herald Tribune to the Chicago Daily News and P. Pulitzer Prize winner Malcolm X, most of them supporters of the American war effort, have nevertheless reported the same facts: the connection of electrodes from field generators to sensitive parts of the body; beatings, castrations and mutilations; the killing of the wounded and the captured.

The extent of these practices and of American participation in them is difficult to judge. The evidence suggests that they are neither rare nor are U. S. soldiers uninvolved. American military equipment is being employed in these tortures; and at least in some parts of the military it appears to be regular, if not even semi-official, practice to turn prisoners over to the South Vietnamese expressly for

the purpose of interrogation-by-torture. The Special Forces present a particularly disturbing picture. They are beginning to display the same mystique of "toughness"; the same fascination with the psychological and sociological potentialities of violence; the same interest in and growing admiration of the enemy's techniques, which characterized (and brutalized) the French paratroopers in Vietnam and Algeria.

With only a minimum of ingenuity, one can find ways to excuse such brutality in wartime. The U. S. cannot control the South Vietnamese. Getting information about Vietcong movements is a matter of life or death. Besides, the Vietcong do it too . . . . But this won't wash, and we know it. Morality is more than a function of necessity. The situation may be dangerous; the enemy ruthless. But our actions are our own--including actions of supporting, encouraging, or even passively allowing torture by South Vietnamese forces.

The issue of torture is not the crucial one for determining the legitimacy of American presence in Southeast Asia. Nor does torture cause as much suffering and so widely afflict the innocent as American air raids. But this is beside the point. Torture is simply a moral issue in itself, and a most serious one for this nation. A Congressional committee or an impartial panel of outstanding citizens, representing all opinions on the war itself, should investigate these charges. Let us have this sore lanced at once.

-- Editorial, Commonweal,  
March 18, 1966

Perspectives on Vietnam

## "CURSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS?"

One of the most disturbing developments of our time is the disrepute in which the peacemakers are held by large segments of populations, not only in America but elsewhere in the world, who profess to being Christian, or something akin to it, in terms of theology or general philosophy. Christ said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" but do Christians really believe it?

A study completed recently by the Canadian Peace Research Institute shows that Christians are more warlike in their attitudes than are agnostics and atheists. The term "warlike" is used to mean an individual's attitude toward conventional defense forces, nuclear weapons and co-existence with communism.

Among all groups, Protestant and Roman Catholic, churchgoers showed the same tendency to believe in military might rather than in the power of love. This revelation should come as a shock to a church which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

--James Dewart, Editor, The Erie (Pa.) Churchman

Perspectives on Vietnam

## VIETNAM: DISSENT FROM DISSENT

But to put the engine of religion entirely and always behind de-escalation is a dangerous tactic to adopt. Instead of providing a counterweight to the war hawks on the "right" there is reason to suppose that restricting or ending the war would instead diminish the broad middle base of political support for the government's present policy of firmness and restraint, thus eroding the moral authority for its present position and polarizing public opinion between irresponsible hawks and irresponsible doves. Which way the decision to bomb Hanoi or mainland China's nuclear installations would then go is anybody's guess.

All this means not that dissent should be silenced but that it should be responsible and realistic. What we need to have is real options, not thought experiments. He who puts forward a proposal for ending the present arbitrament of arms should ask himself how, if he were President, he would upon its adoption manage or reshape our other involvements in southeast Asia and at the same time keep public opinion abreast of the limits of our restrained use of power in the future. If his proposal is in substance for a well tailored surrender, one ought to discuss it in those terms, and not imply that his is simply a more realistic or more idealistic way to achieve the goals of present policy or the choice-worthy from among those goals.

--Excerpt - Paul Ramsey, Christian Century, July 20, 1966

Perspectives on Vietnam

WAR COST

The cost of the Vietnam war--exceeding \$20 billion a year--signifies a sum that could mean quite different purchases.

- . . . It could--each month--finance the complete, seven-year training of almost 70,000 scientists.
- . . . It could--each month--double the resources of the Agency for International Development for a full year's economic programs in 38 foreign countries.
- . . . It could--each month--create three Rockefeller Foundations.
- . . . It could--each month--pay the full year's cost of state and local police in all 50 states.
- . . . It could--every year--provide a 10 per cent salary increase for every U. S. public-school teacher.
- . . . . It could--every year--double the social-security benefits paid to 20 million Americans.

--Emmett John Hughes, Newsweek, July 11, 1966

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PRO and CON - - - - -

QUOTABLE

. . . In this nation, the city--man's proudest creation--has become the seedbed of racism and an embittered violence. In a very odd and ironic way, the finest tools of social organization have become twisted and distorted into instruments of human degradation. Urban renewal, in the experience of countless non-white citizens, has become not a way of bringing new life and fresh hope to people but a method of uprooting people and shuttling them from one blighted ghetto to another. People who have been concerned about the rights of man must now become concerned about the city of man. And, those who have been merely the technical planners and builders of the city of man must now become concerned about the very human rights of man.

--Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, Executive Director,  
NCC Commission on Religion and Race, to the  
New York pre-White House Conference

PRO and CON - - - - - QUOTABLE (continued)

. . . I do not believe that Christians should exercise precensorship or the prohibition of any work of art, picture or novel however questionable it may seem to us. But I do believe that Christians should be vigorous in criticizing the deplorable taste, bad writing and dehumanizing effects of much of the contemporary flood of pornographic literature as anyone else. We do this, however, by pointing out its weaknesses and by encouraging the production of better and more adequate depictions of human life, not by preventing its publication. We object to it not because of some shrinking violet attitude about what should or should not be published but because we have an unswerving commitment to the protection of intimacy and privacy in human life. -- Dr. Harvey Cox, Harvard Divinity School, in his address to the Second North American conference on Church and Family.

. . . The need for a priority program for peace is not new. The need has been rather obvious since the advent of the Atomic Age. We can be grateful that the pervasive concern in our churches over the conflict in Vietnam has helped to bring this question of a priority program to the fore. But such concern, important as it is, provides by itself no adequate foundation for a long-term peace strategy. This foundation must be found in the Scriptural imperatives, the basic imperatives of our faith. A genuine program for peace requires a readiness to undertake patient and persistent efforts to build the things which make for peace. There is no obvious tide to be seized at the full, as in the case of race relations. The struggle is for the foreseeable future. -- Dr. Richard M. Fagley, Executive Secretary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

. . . Judging by remarks you hear from some Christians, they would like to be obedient followers of their Lord, yet at the same time they hope never to be the cause of any trouble. What they seem to have forgotten is that Jesus, himself, even by virtue of his divine nature and also his divine mission, was something of a troublemaker . . . . We meet a son and brother who was something of a puzzle, perhaps an embarrassment to his family. We see a devout Jew who did not hesitate to challenge religious laws that had become oppressive and inhuman. We hear a young preacher daring to make his point, to a congregation in his home town by using illustrations that were bound to inflame their hatred. And we meet a controversial leader who did not hesitate to associate with disreputable characters, even favoring them over the religious leaders of his time.

Indeed, as you read the gospel records, you sometimes get the impression that Jesus went out of his way to upset people, to disturb their complacency, to challenge them to an open conflict, even to arouse their anger.

We are not suggesting that every Christian should therefore join some protest movement or start immediately to challenge the power structures of the community. But we are suggesting that we need not fear to be identified as troublemakers if we are guided by clear convictions that call for immediate action and can see beyond the controversy to the healing that Christ alone can bring. -- Kenneth Morse, Editor in "Messenger," Church of the Brethren.



PRO and CON - - - - - Q U O T A B L E (continued)

. . . Community service is frequently the most adequate expression of moral maturity, declares Fr. Pedro Arrupe, superior general of the Society of Jesus. "We need and are irresistably being led to create . . . a new science which will conceive the community of mankind as a whole, conquering hunger, disease and the ignorance that keeps men from living the good life compatible with their dignity as sons of God." Few intelligent men and women can fail to see the implications of social service of "love thy neighbor as thyself."

--Alert, June, 1966

. . . The tolerance of dissent is, of course, a measure of the vitality of our institutions. It is central to the American tradition. The day an American government begins to panic under criticism will be the day its adversaries abroad can realistically conclude that the U. S. is faltering. It is not only the Communists who misunderstand the democratic process. Counterdemonstrators who hurl eggs and garbage at peace paraders betray a fanatic fury that is the hallmark of the totalitarian mind. Throwing an egg is not an argument but a confession of moral and political bankruptcy.

--The New York Post

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