

LIGHT

Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention
January-February 1983



“And I will show you a still more excellent way.”

1 Corinthians 12:31b

Observe Race Relations Sunday

February 13, 1983

Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

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On Swallowing the Gos-Pill

by J. Gordon Kingsley

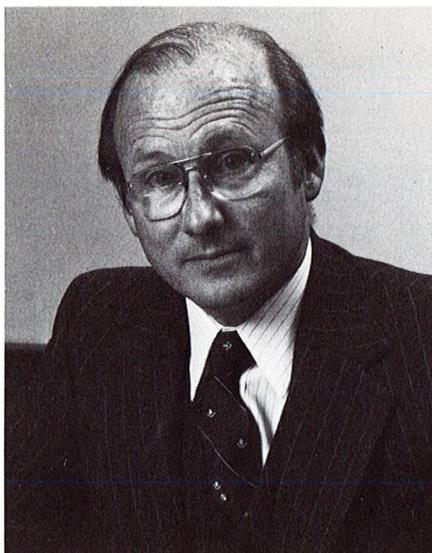
"I can't believe I ate the whole thing."

This immortal line, a whimsical come-on from a forlorn television shill who is about to offer us a chemical remedy for the fifth deadly sin, tame old Gluttony, serves as my text.

It is, and I apologize that it is, taken from that most sub-Biblical subliterary genre, the electronic commercial, though that form may well have done more than true literature or true Bible to shape the consciousness of our age in these latter days when we are all, as James Joyce put it, "Jung and easily Freudened."

But I think the line does most accurately reflect the truth of the Southern Baptist situation vis-a-vis that non-chemical remedy for all the deadly sins and ills of the world, what I want to call this evening the *Gos-Pill*. And therein lies another story.

On June 10 of this year I stepped out of an elevator at the Broadway Plaza Building in Kansas City and met, quite accidentally, a lovely young woman in green silky blouse with ivory lace collar, her equally lovely three-year-old daughter standing beside her, the little girl's tiny straight, blue denim skirt — cute as cute could be — trying to hug her non-hips and stay aloft. I was struck by the very tender and beautiful scene and was just on the way to a gentle reverie on motherhood



J. Gordon Kingsley

Now mind left its reverie and immediately began roving across images of strange verbal constructs shaped during my misspent youth in Baptist churches: images of Jesus healing ten leopards, and my childish fears that one of them would eat him all up; of having a second grade teacher named Isabel Murphy and therefore hearing a Scripture, "surely good Miss Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"; images of a little fat boy, "Round John Virgin," sitting near mother and child and manger — as in "Round John Virgin, mother and child."

And images of the Gos-Pill. "What,"

live it, and die for it, unless of course it was poison?" It seemed so strange, that apostles, saints, and martyrs would die for a pill.

I have since grown up, more or less, and I now know that the Gos-Pill is a very big pill indeed, and that swallowing all of it is *very, very* hard. And, no doubt like yourself, I have never fully understood it, and certainly never been able to "do" it, and so I have made all those little accommodations that we make with the radical gospel of the Lord Christ in order to survive in a very imperfect world. I, too, have preached sermons against materialism and improved my salary thereby. I, too, drive a bigger car than I need and live in a bigger house than I need and justify it by citing the demands of the job and the expectations of the constituents.

Because the Gos-Pill is a very big pill and swallowing it a very difficult task, we tend to nibble around on its edges or to bite out sections of it that look most appetizing, or least forbidding. Contemporary Southern Baptists, for example, tend to chew on that half of the Gos-Pill which works the benefits of *personal* conversion and *personal* moral change — the privatized half of the Gos-Pill. We tend to discard, or leave in the Biblical pillbox, that half which stimulates social justice or moral change in institutions.

We say this is because of our theological heritage, that our rootage in revivalism and in frontier mores has led to an *individual* Gos-Pill for *individual* consumption by *individual* patients. We express faith in some kind of ultimate time-release capsule, that somehow, somewhere, sometime enough people will take the *personal* half of the Gos-Pill so that society will be changed.

I must argue, however, that this is a serious misreading of our theological heritage, and for Baptists to use it as

"Contemporary Southern Baptists . . . tend to chew on that half of the Gos-Pill which works the benefits of personal conversion and personal moral change."

and little girls of the world when the child looked perkily first at me, then at her mom, and asked for all the walls of the hall to hear, "Mommie, why is that man getting out of that alligator?"

my little preacher-infested mind would wonder, "is the Gos-Pill? How big a pill it must be — bigger than cod-liver oil capsules — and how hard to swallow! And how could one preach a pill, and

justification for privatized religion is not only unbiblical, it is unbaptist. And, incidentally, also untrue.

Take our heritage of revivalism. Timothy L. Smith, in his brilliantly—styled volume entitled *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-19th Century America*, has made it abundantly clear that:

Far from disdaining earthly affairs, the evangelists played a key role in the widespread attack upon slavery, poverty, and greed. They thus helped prepare the way both in theory and in practice for what later became known as the social gospel.

The revivalism so formative in American culture and in the Baptist experience included and inspired social concern, rather than ignoring or negating it.

Or look again at our frontier heritage, where rugged individualism, it is said, was bred into Baptist bones. The frontier was, in fact, the home of a very socially-directed culture, with folks helping one another in building the cabins, gathering the crops, raising the roofs — literally and figuratively — and sharing the rollicking worship of camp meetings or the macabre drama of public hangings. Baptist churches were frontier courts, sources of frontier social order, marking the triumph of *group* requirements over *individual* self-indulgence. I have just completed the writing of a short history of Missouri Baptists in preparation for our convention's sesquicentennial in 1984. I was struck in my researches with how early the hardy Baptist pioneers of my state — who banded together specifically to *evangelize* individuals in the "destitute" areas of this land beyond the Great River — began to form the social institutions of Christian social concern: colleges, "sanitariums," orphans' homes, homes for old folks, societies to aid "old worn-out preachers."

The point is this: in our Baptist heritage, evangelism and social concern, private faith and public action, personal salvation and institutional

reform, are both present and both important. Our Baptist forebears did "eat the whole thing," did swallow the *whole* Gos-Pill, and saw it as their calling under God to do so.

How is it, then, that we as contemporary Southern Baptists have come to image ourselves, and are imaged by others, as a people concerned with changing individual lives by evangelism, but a people not much concerned with reforming and renewing social conditions? Let me try out on your thinking four possible explanations.

"Local Baptists do 'eat the whole thing,' swallow the whole Gos-Pill, right well where local ministries are concerned . . ."

1. Personal evangelism most readily yields the kinds of statistics and growth in numbers that Americans equate with "success." Bigger is better in our culture — or has been until quite recently — and so we have done those things which make us big. This has been especially appealing to our pastors, who are of necessity entrepreneurial religionists. Stuck out there on the field with a smile and shoeshine and a Bible and a handshake to make their own way with individual congregations — unprotected by bishops or hierarchical system—Baptists represent the epitome, the triumph, of religion retail as opposed to religion wholesale. And so our models are those of evangelism and growth, of entrepreneurial religious "sales." I am not being anti-evangelistic, and I am certainly not demeaning pastors, whom I consider — when they are faithful to their call — God's choicest servants. I am simply seeking metaphors which make a compelling point. How many pastors were ever called to a bigger church by emphasizing social ministries, and how many have done not only good but well by enthusiastic evangelism? The "super-church" models so often held up before our young ministers are seldom true to *all* of our heritage, personal *and* social.

2. The sheer size of society and government and the shift in the decision-making of social engineering more and more toward huge state or national or business bureaucracies have given autonomous local churches and individual Christians little sense that they can influence the social decisions that really matter.

Local Baptist do "eat the whole thing," swallow the whole Gos-Pill, right well where local ministries are concerned: witness the abundance of

schools, day-care centers, clothes-closets, aid programs for transients, help to folks who are out of work or whose home burns. We "do our social action thing" in free wheeling, rough and ready ways of a Teddy Roosevelt; we are less able to function in the systems and structures symbolized by that "other" Roosevelt, FDR. Our democratic polity and local autonomy suited us beautifully for a frontier of isolated settlements and suits us well to address local concerns and questions of personal morality, but it does not turn either our structures or our thinking toward ministering to highly centralized social entities, social sins, or social needs.

I listened to a ham and eggs chat this week — the eggs not over easy — between Dr. Krister Stendahl, New Testament scholar of Harvard who was lecturing on our campus, and a fine pastor of our state who is one of five we invited for the week as Walter Pope Binns Fellows. As Dr. Stendahl raised the possibility that ours will be recorded as a very moral era in American history — because of the sensitivity to racial justice and sexual equality and a growing rejection of imperialism and a concern for society's needy, issues that have characterized public

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. . . Swallowing

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policy and public discussion — my good pastor friend found his ever-loving mind blown clear out the top. How could this be a “moral” era, with its permissiveness and sexual liberties and plethora of drink and drugs? The discussion was an almost pure vignette: a faithful pastor concerned about the morals and mores of his town and the people he counseled, thereby emphasizing those private and personal issues that he and his church could influence — not those that were in the hands of governments, laws, institutions, bureaucracies, and historical processes.

3. Because we as Baptists arrive at denominational positions on social issues from a political rather than from a theological or hermeneutic base, we have difficulty maintaining consistency year by year. Because we are there when the vote is taken, we certainly have difficulty taking our positions seriously — or having them taken seriously by others — as the will of God. How can one, in point of fact, spend the afternoon at Disneyland or in the French Quarter, then come in sweating and breathless to vote the mind of God Himself on abortion or the role of women or Zionism or Reaganomics, and have it appear as anything other than a comedy, if not a farce?

Again, please don't misunderstand me. I love Baptists with a great love. They are “my people,” and individually and in their churches they are God's finest. But in our conventions, our political arenas, we are something else again. I do not see rigidly hierarchical churches as doing things better — witness the Roman Catholic stand on birth control in an overpopulated world for an example of a sadly irrelevant ethical position rooted in medieval dogma. But my point remains — our social action is vitiated by the uncertain trumpet our democratic processes cause us to sound, as well as by the often very fortunate weak-

ness our resolutions have in shaping denominational action.

I have watched in Missouri as, year by year, the abortion resolutions have first appeared, then grown tougher and tougher, until now we would almost make the Vatican very proud of us. But, of course, next year's convention may vote differently, and let us ponder on the phenomenon of two or three thousand people voting on that kind of issue in the first place in order to define what is “right.” One doesn't do theology, one doesn't do ethics, by plebiscite. One seeks the mind of Christ in scripture and reasoned faith.

4. Related to this is the fact that the Baptist voice is not single, but multitudinous and multifaceted. We suffer from the very biblical problem of the Gadarene demoniac — our voice is Legion. We are the church of Walter Rauschenbusch and Billy Graham, of Harry Emerson Fosdick and Jerry Falwell. What more need be said? Or, if we limit it to *Southern* Baptists, the comparisons are scarcely less striking.

“ . . . our social action is vitiated by the uncertain trumpet our democratic processes cause us to sound. . . ”

Let me illustrate by an experience of Missouri Baptists, a situation still continuing. We have had the fascinating spectacle in our state over the last few years of two Missouri Baptist colleges being defendants, along with other schools, in a court suit brought by a Baptist seminary professor and pastors, the suit over a state grant program which helps students attend Baptist and other private colleges. The executive board of the state convention originally encouraged the suit, and of course it has all the while encouraged and supported its colleges. Small wonder is it that metropolitan newspapers and the state coordinating board for higher education are a bit

bewildered on what the Baptist position is on this particular church-state issue. Here, as so often in matters of civic or social action, Baptists are on both sides of the issue, strategically poised to snatch defeat from the jaws of any possible victory.

I don't know why this bemuses or surprises me. It is a time-honored tradition among Baptists in our parts, as everywhere else.

In our own college history, for example, one of the original trustees, a signer of our charter, was the Rev. Mr. Robert James, Baptist preacher of Kearney, Missouri — 10 miles from our suburban Kansas City town of Liberty. The Rev. Mr. James had two sons, Jesse and Frank. The boys did not turn out well. (Neither attended William Jewell, though the records indicate that each donated \$26.50 to pay off their father's pledge to the college.) Jesse was baptized in the Kearney Baptist Church, shortly after robbing the banks of Liberty, Lexington, and Richmond, Missouri, and Russellville, Kentucky, and just before robbing the bank at Gallatin, Missouri. His pious mother was grateful for his conversion.

All that is history — I lie not. The rest is apocryphal. According to a presumably spurious story, Jesse and Frank and co-workers were once robbing a train on which a Baptist deacon was taking a mission collection from Hardin to Kansas City. Jesse was walking up the aisle of the train, revolver in one hand and hat in another, taking up his special kind of offering, and the deacon (dressed in black frock coat and stove pipe hat) “contributed” 36 cents. He looked more prosperous, and so Jesse put the revolver against the deacon's head, asking if he did not indeed have more money. Cringing, the deacon replied that indeed he had \$18.12 in his boot, but that it was missionary money from the Baptist churches of his area and he hated to lose what the brothers and sisters had sacrificially given. At which point Jesse James is said to have laid down his gun, extended his hand, and said, “Shake, brother, I'm a Baptist, too.”

“I do not see any easy answers to any one of these barriers to effective Christian social action on the part of Southern Baptists, and collectively they are compelling.”

The point is, of course, that there are all kinds of Baptists. Baptists are often able to endorse any habit of life, any social structure or political entity currently in fashion, and our populist preachers are often expected to spread a holy glow, an aura of sanctity, over any cultural forms currently held dear: racial prejudice, militarism, capitalistic greed, political chicanery within and without the church. Our Baptist name is Legion.

Well, now. If my premise is correct that our *true* heritage as Baptists is to swallow the *whole* thing, both the personal and the social halves of the Gos-Pill; and if our recent tendency as Southern Baptists to emphasize the private over the public is the result of (1) our culturally-conditioned drive for numerical “success,” (2) the intractable size and centralization of social institutions, especially business and government, (3) the political rather than theological or hermeneutic base of our positions on social issues, and (4) the inconsistency and contradictoriness and contrarities among Baptist voices on virtually any issue, where does all that leave us?

I do not see any easy answers to any one of these barriers to effective Christian social action on the part of Southern Baptists, and collectively they are compelling. One takes comfort in the fact that different denominational families of God’s children emphasize different things, and someone needs to do personal evangelism.

But we can say a bit more than that, I think, perhaps best couched in the whimsical but very serious way pioneered by Paul Dickson in his two books, *The Official Rules* and *The Official Explanations*. It was the gospel according to Dickson, you may

recall, which gave us such truths as Woody Allen’s Distinction: “The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, but the lamb won’t get much sleep.” And Erma Bombeck’s Rule of Medicine: “Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.” And Calvin Coolidge’s Law: “When large numbers of people are out of work it can lead to unemployment.” And John Paul Getty’s Principle: “The meek shall inherit the earth, but not its mineral rights.” And Clare Boothe Luce’s Truism: “No good deed ever goes unpunished.”

In that spirit of playful seriousness I wish to offer Four Words for swallowing the whole Gos-Pill, that is, for Southern Baptists’ Christian social action.

Law I. Thou Shalt Not Confuse Many with Much. Baptists are many; sometimes, as Gaines Dobbins observed, we are not much. Humility is admirable, and we so often have so much to be humble about.

Law II. Thou Shalt Not Confuse Salt with Sandblasting, Leaven with Breadtrucks. We are the salt of the earth, the leaven in the loaf, particularly in a secular society where we are very much in the minority. Our strategies need to reflect that position, for when we bluster we become either funny or pathetic, like little boys making a muscle. David may occasionally kill Goliath, but he can seldom bring him back to life. And it is the role of the Christian to bring life.

Law III. Thou Shalt Not Confuse Magnolia Blossoms and Hominy Grits with the Table Settings of the Kingdom of God. A culturally-conditioned faith is usually more cultural than it is Christian.

Law IV. Thou Shalt Be, Always, About Thy Father’s Business — *All* Thy Father’s Business. That is the importance — the crucial importance — of the Christian Life Commission for all of Southern Baptist life. We need you so urgently — I almost said desperately — to sensitize us to the “doing” of the whole gospel, to focus our thinking and energies, to goad us when we are complacent, to guide us when we are wandering, to teach us when we are doltish.

William Jewell conducts programs in Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and one of our recently returned students told me of a scene he read or heard about occurring in the chapel of an Oxford college. The speaker for the chapel service was the youngest bishop of the Anglican Church, said to be the best theological mind of his generation. As a student, sitting just halfway back on the right, looked at the bishop seated on the platform, his eye was riveted to a large gold cross suspended from a chain around the worthy’s neck. The light reflected from that cross, darting here and there about the chapel, and the cross came to stand in the student’s mind for all that is good and holy and worthy in our faith. Then the student’s gaze was diverted for a moment, and when he turned to look again, he saw the young bishop idly, thoughtlessly, carelessly cleaning his fingernails with the edge of the cross.

How easy it is for us to send our faith on tawdry, dirty little personal errands of self-aggrandizement, self-promotion, or self-service. God calls us to be his prophets, not his princes, not cultural priests, not chaplains of a magnolia-scented status quo. We must drink his cup — *all* of it. We must care for his children — *all* of them, including “the least of these my brethren.” And we must obey his gospel — *the whole thing*.

J. Gordon Kingsley is president of William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. This address was given at the annual meeting of the Christian Life Commission in Nashville, Tennessee.

Be Ye Doers of the Word

by Carolyn Weatherford

The missionary was exasperated. She was expecting a crowd for Sunday dinner. The children were arriving from the boarding school on Friday. Her lessons for the next issue of the WMU magazine were long since due. Her faithful helper had just told her, "I am leaving. I am going to work for your neighbor."

She questioned him carefully, assuring him that she would make any adjustments necessary to keep him. His response stopped her. "I have been very happy here. The work is fine. But I am searching for meaning for my life. I do not know whether to be a Christian, or to follow the Muslim faith of my friends and family. I have lived and worked in your home for six months. I know what being a Christian means from observing you and your family. Now I am going to work for a Moslem family. I will see if it is better to be a Christian or a Moslem."

During pre-school retreat, the MK (missionary kid) asked to talk with the Bible study leader. The summer months had been hard for her, coming to the States without her parents, visiting relatives and preparing for her freshman year at the university. She had spent most of her life in a country where less than one percent of the population is Christian. She had seen first hand the circumspect lives the Christians lived, leaving all symbols and activities of the pagan religions behind. Her eyes bright with tears, she said, "How can I tell the Christians from the non-Christians in Alabama?"

The arena was filled with people, enjoying the beautiful Jewish artist, united in their appreciation for her music. Then the mood of the meeting changed. The purpose of the meeting had been to provide entertainment of significance, attracting the heavily Jewish population of the city. This was to be followed by a presentation of Christianity by the equally attractive and skilled young man who stood after the musician concluded her final



Carolyn Weatherford

number. As the man began to speak, a large group stood and began to shout, "Every Jew should leave!" Others began to join this group, moving toward the exit, while others sat quietly embarrassed. Then another group stood and began to shout, "Jesus loves you!" A shouting match ensued, and some of the shouts of "Jesus loves you" changed to hostile rebukes slung at those who were leaving.

"Clearly his (Jesus') life was to be that of an activist, and he went about putting into action the words that he spoke."

What does ethics have to do with missions? These three illustrations are typical of events in our day. There can be no doubt that a verbal, direct witness is essential as the Christian confronts in love the non-Christian, presenting the claims of Christ. It is equally true that the deeds of the Christian must not seal the lips. Paul was able to say with authority to the Philippians, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

It is interesting and instructive to note that the New Testament speaks more often of *doing* good than of *being* good. Jesus set the pattern for his disciples as he moved them from place to place, preaching, but also healing and feeding and serving. Toward the end of his earthly ministry, in response to a mother's natural desire for her sons to have prominence and power, Jesus reminded his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28). This statement, with an earlier one, brackets the servant life Jesus presented his followers. At the beginning of his ministry he had said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

At what might be called his inaugural address in the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus acknowledged that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18). Clearly his life was to be that of an activist, and he went about putting into action the words that he spoke.

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1983
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
SEMINAR ON

Discipleship
&
Ethics

MARCH 21-23 **GALT HOUSE**
Louisville, Kentucky

You Are Invited . . .

We want you to join us for this seminar on "Discipleship and Ethics." The disciple prays for and works for the will of God here on earth. To be a disciple means to have responsibilities in a world of hunger, violence, war, and moral decay. The gospel has a word of hope for the disciple about feeding the hungry, washing feet, and . . .

Meeting
Accommodations . . .

The meetings will take place at the Galt House where special rates have been secured: \$43 single; \$53 double, triple, or quadruple;

Program Personalities Include these Noted Speakers . . .

- **Bill Hendricks**, professor of theology and philosophy of religion at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, San Francisco, California.
- **Robert H. Schuller**, founder and senior minister of the Crystal Cathedral of Garden Grove, California (Reformed Church of America), the setting for "The Hour of Prayer," the most widely viewed of all television church services. His most recent book is *Self Esteem, the New Reformation*.
- **Gordon Kingsley**, president of William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri. He is author of a *A Time for Openness*.
- **Richard Foster**, writer in residence and assistant professor of theology at Friends University, Wichita, Kansas. He has written *Celebration of Discipline and Freedom of Simplicity*.
- **Arthur Simon**, founder and executive director of Bread for the World, an organization dedicated to education and advocacy related to the problems of world hunger. He is the author of the award winning book, *Bread for the World*.
- **Jim Walis**, editor of *Sojourners* magazine, author of *The Call to Conversion and Agenda for Biblical Peacemaking*, and editor of *Waging Peace*.
- **Charles R. Swindoll**, senior pastor of the First Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California. Swindoll's books, *Improve Your Serve* and *Strengthening Your Grip*, are currently number one and two on the Christian Bestseller's list.
- **Eleanor Nutt**, speaker and writer, Louisville, Kentucky.
- **Don Shriver**, president of Union Theological Seminary, New York City.
- **Gladys Lewis**, a Southern Baptist missionary to Paraguay who now resides in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

send the Commission your registration fee, we will send you the official form on which to make reservations with the hotel.

To register please send your check to the Christian Life Commission with a copy of the form below or with the information requested on the form. Join us for this exciting seminar on "Discipleship and Ethics," March 21-23, in Louisville, Kentucky.

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Enclosed is my registration check:

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**Please Pull Out This Poster
and Place It on Your
Church Bulletin Board**

“Our church budgets will reflect our priorities, our concern for people in need, our urgency about world missions.”

Mission action is a way that Baptists have of putting faith into action. Mission action moves the congregation out from the church building into the waiting world, where it ministers and witnesses to persons of special need or circumstance who are not enrolled in the programs of the church. It is a way of getting to those who often are overlooked in the routine ministries of the church. It provides the searchlight for finding people who are isolated by cultural differences, language differences, or physical limitations. It includes the faith-sharing of the Christian witness, but it includes also help for the physical and social and emotional and economic needs that bind or separate. It is the direct response to the challenge, “But whoever has the world’s goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in Him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (I John 3:17-18).

First, we can strive to live lives that are exemplary, to be totally Christian in our business dealings, in our citizenship (even obeying speed laws!), in our use of our material possessions and our acquiring of those. Even the way we handle our church business meetings will give testimony to our faith. Our church budgets will reflect our priorities, our concern for people in need, our urgency about world missions. News reports from our associational, state, and national gatherings of Baptists often are read around the world. Our actions here must be explained by those called of God and sent by us to proclaim Christ to those who do not know him.

Second, we must follow the commands and example of Jesus as he acted from his compassion. The actions to be taken by the individual Christian vary as do communities and jobs. The actions supplement what the Christian already has done in praying

and giving money to hasten the day when the world will know Christ. The actions are on-the-spot, “I’ll do it myself,” kinds of things, taking responsibility, assuming risks, being accountable for the near edge of the problem. Even a hurried glance will give the Christian servant insight into the action needed. A growing understanding of one’s own spiritual gifts will be a second clue to what can be done. Here are just a few from many possibilities:

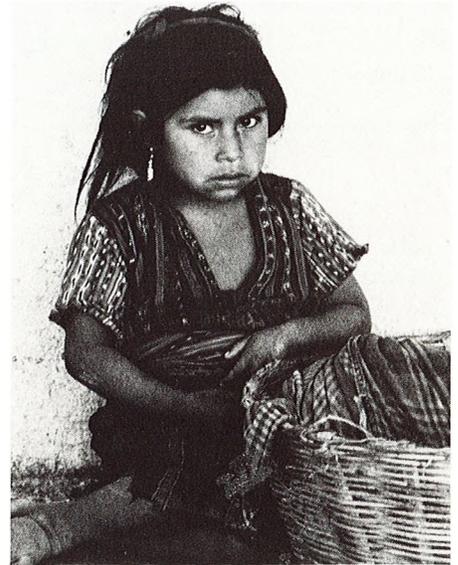
1. Hunger. Not all hungry people live in Africa and Asia. While more and more funds are needed to feed the people of the world, direct involvement is called for in many communities. But more than the immediate easing of hunger, there is urgent need for dealing with the problems that create or permit hunger in the technical world of the twentieth century.

“Concerned Christians on the local scene can become involved in functioning as salt and light in their world, thus making a difference in the world.”

2. Aging. Everybody is aging. Every community has aged people who have unique needs. Often the need is more emotional than physical, as problems of loneliness, fear of venturing outside, fear of abuse or attack grow in the mind and in reality.

3. Political influence. Relatively few adults bother to vote. Even fewer take the risk of getting into politics. Most people cannot name their state representative, their county officials, who could be influenced by the wishes of their constituency.

4. Refugees and other internationals. People are coming to the United States from countries where the Christian gospel is unknown, or hardly known. They are a fertile foreign mission field in our midst. Some are



influential, affluent people who will return to their countries as leaders. Those who remain here need resettlement, orientation, and friendships.

5. Prisoners and their families. Prison reform, overcrowded prisons and the building of new facilities are topics of interest in news magazines. What to do about youthful offenders, how to rehabilitate long-term inmates, and how to minister to the families

outside are questions of growing concern.

Missions too often is conceived as something that happens “over there.” Concerned Christians on the local scene can become involved in functioning as salt and light in their world, thus making a difference in the world. This is not a substitute for witnessing or mass evangelism. It is the way to tell of the Bread of Life while providing bread for the next meal, the way of holding forth the Light of the World while turning on the electricity in the ghetto. It is the way to show love in action.

Carolyn Weatherford is president of Woman’s Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

World Hunger

by John R. Cheyne

Baptists: People Who Care

The stark eyes, swollen tummy and ashen complexion continue to haunt us as Christians. They appear on television screens, magazine covers and unsolicited brochures which appear mysteriously in our mail. They cry out, "I'm hungry — feed me!"

Articles contrasting the overwhelming material resources of our nation and the dire need in other countries constantly remind us of our responsibility to become involved. Other factors cloud the issue. Government aid policies, massive amounts spent for armaments and military aid, multinational companies exploiting cheap labor markets, grain silos bulging, wheat sales tied to political policies in which food is used as a weapon — all these are part of the frustrating world hunger dilemma.

We are at once overwhelmed by the awesomeness of the problem and our apparent impotency to do much about it.

Hunger walks, forced fasts, rice bowls, political lobbying efforts, and even special programs within our churches have demonstrated the urgent desire of many to become personally involved. Yet somehow there is always the lurking suspicion that after all is said and done, waste or corruption or mismanagement probably takes the largest part before funds reach the field or food gets into the mouths of the hungry. The question still remains in the mind of many: "What can be done?"

During the past few years the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has initiated a comprehensive and innovative plan for response in the overseas setting. In essence, the plan calls for combining the best developmental principles of self-reliance with the biblical concern for the whole person — spiritually and physically. It begins with the underlying causes of hunger and endeavors to enable people to help



themselves rather than becoming dependent on continuing aid.

The holistic approach of Southern Baptists provides a unique advantage in dealing with world hunger. Most major denominations work through a relief agency established for the purpose of dealing only with the physical dimension of human need.

Southern Baptists, on the other hand, have chosen to respond in the context of our basic reason for being overseas — sharing the whole gospel with the whole person. With almost 3,200 missionaries in 96 different countries who already know the languages of the people and understand cultures, the Foreign Mission Board is able to project programs at the grass-roots level. With national colleagues, missionaries meet people and minister directly to their needs.

Continued and consistent giving on the part of Southern Baptists has

helped make this possible. In 1981, the Foreign Mission Board received \$4,760,225 for world hunger and relief. By the end of October 1982, it had received \$3,564,695 and allocated more than \$6.5 million for hunger and relief projects. Funds available at the end of 1981 made this possible.

Southern Baptist response to world hunger has not been limited to giving. Men and women from almost every walk of life have participated personally in projects overseas. Technicians and farmers, dam builders and well drillers, nurses and nutrition workers, literacy workers and agricultural experts, and an innumerable host of others have served as volunteers.

The projects, as varied as the workers, have addressed both urban and rural problems. Individuals, small groups and whole state conventions have been involved.

One of the best known is the Sanwabo project in Upper Volta, sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The total rural development project includes 17 villages. The center of the project is a dam, forming a 60-acre lake which provides water for fish farming, irrigation and livestock. Vegetable farms around the lake will provide extra food. Nutrition, literacy, under-five clinics, clean water wells and basic educational facilities (combined with a thorough program of evangelism, church planting and leadership training) complete the program.

In the Philippines a rural life center ties a variety of training programs to Christian farmers' clubs, while in Brazil, a Better Life Project's controlled irrigation plan has revolutionized life in the village of Gravata. Well drilling provides clean water and a school lunch program helps malnourished children move toward normal nutrition in the small Caribbean country of Haiti.

Baptists recognize that they cannot feed the world nor presume to solve the dilemma of world hunger, but these grass-root projects have started people on the path of development and helped them see ways they can help themselves. Governments and other groups are copying some of these projects.

Making Responses Personal

Through a program called MANNA (Ministering Aid to Needy Nations Abroad) Baptist Student Unions, small groups and individuals have been able to personalize their involvement by taking responsibility for bite-sized pieces of projects. Some underwrite

the cost of a goat or a cow, while others pick up the cost of a major portion of a project. A list of projects which may be sponsored is available through the Foreign Mission Board.

Agricultural Missions Fellowships have been organized in several states to work closely with agricultural missionaries. They provide technical information, newsletters, personnel and other assistance. For example, one group researched building a windmill, then proceeded to purchase, ship and install it overseas.

More and more opportunities are opening for people qualified to serve as career missionaries in specialties meeting human need. An engineer has gone to Upper Volta; a forestry expert is assigned to Botswana; 35 agriculturalists serve in a variety of places. Pub-

lic health workers, nursing specialists, social workers and others help provide a highly qualified and skilled staff which is reaching out and ministering in areas of human need.

Perhaps the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe best expressed the idea behind holistic response when they adopted a slogan for their convention—"Baptists: People Who Care!" It is this kind of caring in Jesus' name, coupled with the dedication and commitment to become personally involved, that can make a difference for our hungry world.

John Cheyne is senior consultant for human needs ministry for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Peace with Justice

by Ronald D. Sisk

Arms Control Verification: Yes or No?

Christian concern for peace with justice in a nuclear age means that we must learn about the specific issues involved in efforts at arms control. The most basic issue for many Americans centers around the question of trust. Simply put, can we trust the Russians? No, most Americans would argue that we cannot. How, then, is arms control possible? The answer is verification. In order for the United States to be able to enter into an arms control agreement with the Soviet Union, we have to have reliable ways of making certain they are not doing what they say they will not do.

In order to monitor Soviet activity, the United States has developed an immense, elaborate system of overlapping human and technological intelligence collection. It is designed to give us the most complete information possible. The Soviets, of course, have a similar network pointed toward us.

What is necessary, from the Ameri-

can point of view, is to convince the Soviets that their chances of getting caught if they cheat are too great to make cheating worthwhile. Obviously, no such system is foolproof, but many American arms control experts agree that ours is good enough to make verification highly likely and cheating relatively unlikely. Here, adapted from a report prepared by the Federation of American Scientists, is a summary of the basic provisions of an arms control agreement and how they would be verified:

1. Deployment. We would have to be certain the Soviets did not place in combat readiness more missiles, submarines or bombers than an agreement allowed. We would verify Soviet compliance with any new agreements on deployment the same way we watch them now. Missiles, submarines and bombers are large and not easily hidden. American satellites are estimated to be able to take pictures of

any object in the Soviet Union six feet or more in size. We have also adopted a counting rule which assumes the worst by counting missiles capable of carrying multiple warheads as the highest possible number and by assuming that weapons which could be either nuclear or conventional are in fact nuclear. Administration officials have estimated there to be an over 90 percent probability of detection of any violation of weapons deployment agreements.

2. Missile testing. If we agree not to test new missiles, we have to be sure the Soviets don't either. To verify such an agreement we would use the same satellite technology as in number one plus a whole range of radar observation by American ships, planes and ground-based listening posts. There are, for example, two American listening stations in Sinkiang Province in western China monitoring the main

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Soviet missile testing complex at Tyuratam. Similar installations in Norway monitor tests of missiles fired from Soviet submarines.

3. Warhead testing. The key component of a nuclear weapon is, of course, the bomb itself. An effective arms control agreement would have to limit testing of new devices. We already have a number of ways of monitoring Soviet testing, but the proposed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, if ratified, will include two more to which the Soviets have already agreed. First, each side would have "black boxes" — unmanned, tamper proof, seismic monitors — placed in the other's territory. Second, in cases where there was suspicion of a possible violation, actual on-site inspection would be permitted.

4. Missile and warhead production. Could the Soviets build missiles or bombs secretly and gain an advan-

tage? Probably not. We know where the Soviet plants are. We know what they produce. Our satellite and intelligence systems give us good knowledge of activity at those sites. Under an arms production halt, we would be able to tell whether the Soviets were complying by monitoring their plants. Questionable activities could be checked out by on-site inspection procedures similar to those used for the test ban. Even if the Soviets were able to put together some kind of secret arms factory, such production would have to be so limited in order to avoid detection that its impact on the overall arms balance would be negligible. In addition, even if a good number of weapons were built secretly, we would see them as soon as they began to be deployed.

5. Finally, true arms control would necessitate some kind of international regulation of production of and access to weapons-grade nuclear materials, in order to prevent secret production or terrorism. The International Atomic Energy Agency could serve as the verification body at the front end of

the production process. Its role would be to control inventories, verify stockpiles and carry out whatever inspections might be necessary to ensure compliance. As with any other part of this agreement, the refusal to permit inspection would have to be viewed as proof of violation.

Can an arms control agreement be verified? The answer is, "Yes, well enough to make the dangers of cheating far greater than the benefits to be gained thereby." The Soviets know that, if they were caught cheating, America would renew the arms race immediately. The overwhelming likelihood is that they would be caught. Therefore, there is little reason for them to cheat.

Arms control is possible if both sides have the will to see to it that such agreements take place.

Ronald D. Sisk is director of program development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission with a major assignment for programs related to peace with justice.

LIGHT Focuses on Moral Issues



LIGHT, a bimonthly Christian social ethics publication, was introduced about 30 years ago as a monthly publication of the Social Service Commission, the forerunner of the Christian Life Commission.

LIGHT was distributed only as an "occasional bulletin" after the early 1960s, but in 1978 it was reactivated as a regular publication.

The current newsletter format is designed to communicate information and ideas about current ethical issues and appropriate social action to interested pastors, students, church staff and denominational workers in the field of Christian ethics.

LIGHT will be sent free of charge to interested Southern Baptists who request it.

- The following person(s) would be interested in receiving LIGHT free of charge:
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Christian Citizenship

by Larry Braidfoot

“Strengthening Families” and the Economic Crisis

Southern Baptists have designated “Strengthening Families” as a major emphasis for the years 1982-85. As Southern Baptists seek to carry out this emphasis, there is great need to give attention to the impact of the current economic crisis in our nation upon the family.

Southern Baptists don't need to be told that our nation is undergoing a serious economic crisis. Most Southern Baptists are aware that unemployment in our nation is over 10 percent. Employment has actually declined in 35 states and in the District of Columbia. The real purchasing power of the family has declined by about five percent in 1980 and another three percent in 1981.

Those statistics are shocking. Perhaps one negative impact of the current economic crisis is that we get insensitive to economic deprivation. Southern Baptists simply can't afford to get callous to this kind of suffering. Of the nation's 60 million families, 2.3 million families at present have no wage earner who is working. Another 4.8 million families have one wage earner who is unemployed. Unemployment and economic deprivation are family problems of a very serious nature.

What does all of this do for the families to whom Southern Baptists seek to minister? One thing it does is create fear. According to a recent Gallup poll, eight percent of America's workers are afraid they will lose their jobs within the next 12 months. That means that one out of every six workers in the United States is either out of work or is afraid that he or she will soon be.

One of the most tangible results of

the economic stress on families is in the area of housing. Many families are having a hard time buying a home. Last year, only 13.5 percent of all homes were purchased by families or individuals buying their first home, down from 35 percent in 1977 and 17.8 percent in 1979. The median income of families buying homes increased from \$28,110 in 1980 to \$39,196 in 1981. Our tax system makes available to the home owner a number of financial benefits --- for those who can afford to buy a home and to receive them. But keeping a home in the midst of economic crisis is another thing. Home foreclosures in early 1982 were at the highest rate since the 1930s. Of the nation's 27 million home loans, about one in 200 is involved in foreclosure proceedings throughout the na-

high. But economic stress seems to bring it out with even greater frequency. One northern state had an increase in the frequency of child abuse of 16 percent in 1981. But in the 10 counties with the greatest unemployment, child abuse increased an astonishing 69 percent. In one southern city, calls to a counseling center about depression and spouse abuse resulting from economic stress have increased 125 percent in 1982. This is a city in which unemployment has increased considerably in the last year, and the state is one of the highest in unemployment. Who can measure the effect of this abuse on battered wives and abused children?

Some individuals and groups are hurt worse than others by economic stress. Women and ethnic minorities

“In one Southern city, calls to a counseling center about depression and spouse abuse resulting from economic stress have increased 125 percent in 1981.”

tion. About 1.5 million, or 5.5 percent, of the loans are more than 30 days past due. And the rate has been growing in recent months.

The relationships within the family are affected in a way that is hard to capture with numbers. Parents who lose jobs and find themselves unable to pay their bills begin to lose self-esteem and confidence in themselves. Frustration and anger build. The inner emotion boils over and reaches out in rage, often at other family members.

One form this takes is child and spouse abuse. All of us are aware that abuse of family members is already

are more vulnerable to economic stress than white males. Unemployment among blacks is much higher than among whites, especially among teenagers and younger adults. Economic stress is often hardest on women. Between 15 and 20 percent of America's households are headed by single females. Working women in 1980 had a median income of \$4,920, while men had a median income of \$12,530. With that income level, women who head households are unable to prepare for times of adversity by savings.

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Economic stress has its own particular impact upon white-collar workers. Unemployment in white-collar ranks has risen to about five percent. But the anxiety about future cuts is widespread.

Connected with all kinds of unemployment are emotions and feelings which are unhealthy. The human being who feels obsolete, discarded, and unproductive is failing to experience God's intentions in his or her life.

"The voices of Christians need to be raised in support of policies and plans which will seek economic stability for our nation with fairness for citizens of all classes and groups."

What can Southern Baptists do in such a time to attempt to fulfill our emphasis on "Strengthening Families"?

First, we have to take with a new seriousness the economic needs of our fellow Americans. We are in a time of stress in which millions of families are being affected by economic pressures beyond their doing. We must appropriate in the ministry of our churches the teachings of the Bible regarding our responsibility to care for the needy. Jesus was a man of compassion who cared for their suffering.

Second, we must recognize in a new way that the spiritual needs of those with whom we work are affected by feelings of helplessness, abandonment, and defeat. We must convince individuals that they are worthwhile even if they have lost a job or a business. We must encourage individuals to believe that they are important and worthwhile even if they are no longer able to make their house payments. We must undergird the worth of the individual apart from physical possessions and not engage in the neglect which passes by the stranger in the ditch. We must creatively find ways to say to individu-

als that they are valuable to God even when they don't feel that they are. And we must say that God works in stress and suffering today just as he did in the ministry of Jesus and his crucifixion.

Third, we must work for national policies which are responsible economic policies. Our nation threatens to be torn apart by competing economic interests. The influence of special interest groups of all sorts is increasing greatly. The voices of Christians need to be raised in support of policies and plans which will seek economic stability for our nation with fairness for citizens of all classes and groups.

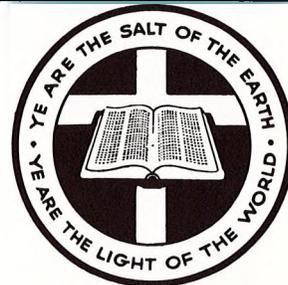
Economic concerns are difficult to understand and to analyze. The figures are so large most of us have a hard time even thinking about them. What does a budget deficit of \$110 billion mean? We're not sure because it has never happened before.

If Southern Baptists and other Christians are going to seek to strengthen families and to make this nation a better place in which to live and raise children, we are going to have to find some answers to these economic problems which pose such a threat to our nation. In 1983 Christian citizens are going to have to work harder than ever, to grapple with concepts and ideas which are foreign to everyday life, and to seek a clearer understanding of our nation's priorities. That is the challenge which confronts us.

Larry Braidfoot is general counsel and director of research for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission with a major assignment for programs related to citizenship and economics.

LIGHT, a bimonthly bulletin for pastors, state and national denominational workers, and other persons who have a special interest in applied Christianity, is published by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tenn. 37219.

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**Of The Southern
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