

LIGHT

Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

May 1983

The Idea of Being a Baptist

by Cecil E. Sherman

I am a Baptist. I am born, bred, and buttered Baptist. My grandfather graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1892; he served as a pastor for all of his life. On my mother's side, preachers and deacons were the rule; not to be a practicing Baptist was cause for family talk. I was a member of the Cradle Roll, the Royal Ambassadors, and the Baptist Training Union. As a boy I was blessed with Baker James Cauthen for a pastor and W. L. Howse for a religious educator. I professed faith when I was nine, was called to preach when I was 17, and promptly enrolled in a Baptist college; and from there I would go to a Baptist seminary. And all of these institutions were Southern Baptist.

What was the result of this Baptist background? Did I rebel? At some point in my life did I react to this much sameness? Was I ever of a mind to "kick over the traces" and escape the Baptist family? Not really. Of course I learned the foibles of the Baptist system. Sometimes I was sorry to see one of my friends aban-

don his heritage and go out of the Baptist family. Yet I can honestly say that I did not seriously consider being anything other than a Baptist. I was proud to be a Baptist.

Now I am in my mid-fifties, but 10 years from retirement. I guess I am pretty set in my ways. It would seem that the die is cast for me. I will always be a Baptist, and I am glad that is so. But a new thought has been running around in my mind of late. As I have attended our annual conventions, as I have read what some of our elected leaders have said, as I have watched what some of them have been doing, I must confess that there have been times when I have been ashamed. A church member clips *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* for me. I have seen quotations from Southern Baptist leaders that embarrassed me. My church members have told of conversations they have had with non-Baptist friends in which they had to explain that all Baptists are not like some Baptist leaders. And again, my own members tell me

they are ashamed, embarrassed.

Proud to be a Baptist. Ashamed to be a Baptist. These two conflicting ideas are within me at the same time. But for all the abuse of the Baptist name, I am still proud to be a Baptist. And let me tell you why.

I Believe in Experienced Religion

Baptists are the people who legitimize themselves by way of religious experience. I have a firsthand knowledge of this process; here is how it works:

1. As a little boy, I was moved upon by the Spirit of God. Sin became real to me, my sin. Christ and his sacrifice at Calvary became personal; he died in my place. I wanted to be a Christian. Then God did a good work in me. He brought about the birth of faith. I knew this because it happened to me. I became a Christian.

Then I went forward on a Sun-

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Have a Good Day

"Have a good day." The greeting has become essentially equivalent to the genial "Howdy" with which I grew up long ago and far away in Texas.

I know some otherwise reasonably normal human beings whose blood pressure accelerates dangerously at the sound of these words. For them this greeting seems to be something akin to the mark of the beast. I do not personally, however, have that kind of antipathy toward it.

I have been thinking a little about what it takes for me to have a good day.

It is a good day for me now when I check into a hotel and the registration clerk does not condescendingly ask if I want the AARP discount.

I can have a good day by seeing a huge pileated woodpecker on a huge old white oak tree in our backyard early in the morning before I go to work.

My day can be made by hearing our two and a half year old granddaughter saying on the phone, "Po, Po, send me some pepper stick" (because her cruel parents will not provide her with an adequate supply of peppermint candy).

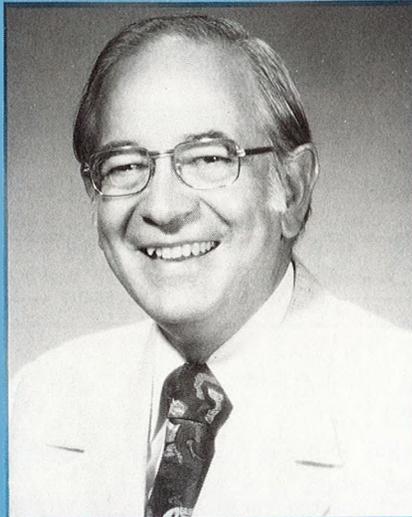
Catching my limit of trout in the New Mexico mountains which I passionately love can assure me of a good day.

Preparing a sermon and preaching it with some feeling of unction will still give me a good day after 43 years of trying.

Mary Louise, my wonderful wife of 36 years, can assure me of a good day if she has hot corn bread for supper.

On and on I could go; and, demonstrably, I very nearly already have.

There are other things, how-



ever, that make for a good day.

A good day is a day when God's gift of life is accepted gladly and used willingly. A good day is a day when I am free enough from crisis or harassment or regret to appreciate the song that is everlastingly in the air and to see the star that is eternally in the sky. A good day is a day when family relationships are savored rather than soured. A good day is a day characterized by some measure of peace, some degree of tranquility in the midst of controversy, some outweighing of pain with authentic pleasure. A good day is a day when the gifts of sight and hearing and taste and feeling are not taken for granted but are experienced with joy and gratitude. A good day is a day when good relationships with good friends are relished. A good day is a day when a good talk with an old friend is managed.

A good day is a day when fulfilling and satisfying work leaves me tired but satisfied that I have accomplished something to honor the Lord and to help others. A good day is a day when I have done something specific and definite to make this world a better place in which to live. A good

day is a day when I have laid up some small treasure in heaven where moth cannot corrupt and where rust cannot corrode and where thieves cannot break through and steal. A good day is a day when something beautiful has etched itself into my consciousness so as to overcome something ugly that could have found lodging there. A good day is a day when I have spoken a word for justice, when I have done something for someone else that I would have liked for them to do for me, when I have loved God with my whole heart and some neighbor as myself.

And is it not a good day for us all

- when exploitation yields to justice,
- when corruption is conquered by righteousness,
- when vested interests fail to manipulate the system to sock it to the poor and provide welfare for the rich,
- when pornography slinks away from the presence of authentic sexuality,
- when gamblers' shameless and greedy overtures are rejected and the best interests of all the people prevail,
- when the overfed are sensitized and moved with compassion to feed the hungry,
- when the obscenity of war is rejected and the people of God move to do the things that make for peace,
- when death is somehow swallowed up by life?

Have a good day.

Joy Valentine

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day morning when the pastor gave the altar call. I declared that Christ had come to live in my heart. I still remember Dr. Caution asking me, "Cecil, has Jesus come into your heart?" Before the congregation I answered, "Yes." On the strength of this experience, I was admitted to membership in the Polytechnic Baptist Church. 2. Much later in life, experience again played a part. I was now a young seminarian. A country church had asked me to serve them as pastor. I needed to be ordained. I went again to my home church. An ordaining council was formed. They questioned me at length. But the first question they asked me was, "Cecil, tell us of your call to preach." So, I related to them the *experience* I had when I was 17 years old. God had moved upon me, impressed me, urged me to go into the gospel ministry. When the ordaining counsel heard this, they believed me, recommended me for ordination, and thus I became a gospel minister. It was on the witness of an experience with God.

In these days I am hearing another word among us. When I go to the pastors' conferences and the evangelism meetings, when I listen to some convention sermons and addresses, I hear more asked of Baptists than experience. At some length I have heard testimonies to belief in certain doctrines. So, if one does not hold to creationism, inerrancy, or pre-millenarianism, then that one is not really acceptable to the body. To say these shibboleths, to rise before a large house and declare belief in these special interpretations, can legitimize.

What an impoverishment! Once we were committed to an irreducible declaration of experience with God. Now we have come full circle. We are now like the people we reacted

away from in the first place more than 300 years ago. For the way to get into a creedal church is to rise before the body, recite a confession or catechism, and then acceptance is given. While this may make for a doctrinally correct people, it often also leaves out the most important part. Anyone can learn some words. To be moved upon by the Spirit of God is of the heart of religion as Baptists understand revealed religion. All of us are seeking an experience with God, and to be able to rattle a testimony to the right doctrines does not assure that personal experience.

These new voices among us are assuming experience while demanding doctrinal uniformity. They are afraid of diversity more than they are afraid of a dry, dead, correct theology that leaves the heart untouched. I think we need to return to the first Baptist premise. Let leadership bear witness to an experience with God and leave the rest of doctrine to find its own level. Both the route of experience and the way of creeds have risks. Our Baptist forebears decided upon experience. It's better to stick with the Baptist way.

I Believe in Voluntary Participation

The year was 1636. The place was Massachusetts Bay Colony. A difficult, sometimes self-righteous man was at odds with the authorities. His name was Roger Williams. Williams would not conform to Puritan orthodoxy, and for his independence he was put out of the colony. Thus began Rhode Island.

Rhode Island was founded upon a peculiar, novel, and brand new idea of Roger Williams. Religion will be a voluntary association. No one will be required to go to church. No one will be kept from going to the church of his or her choice. No religious rule will be enforced by the state. The church will not be able to use the arm of the state to pressure the people to do this or not do that. The only role the state will have is to referee and see that fairness and

order are followed in the practice of religion.

What followed was considered a curse, a blight, by the proper Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Baptists, Catholics, Jews, and even Quakers were allowed to have meeting houses. It was a scandal! But later generations would not think so. Jefferson, Madison, Leland, and Backus would hold that Williams' experiment was right and good. Today it is the order of the land. And it all began in the head of one who would for a time be a Baptist. Baptists have always claimed Roger Williams. Especially have we declared that we believe in his idea: all religion will be voluntary. I am proud of that idea and the part Baptists played in making that idea the law of the land.

Are Baptists sticking by their idea of voluntary religion? Many are not. There is a noncooperating (we are *all* independent) Baptist in Lynchburg, Virginia, who is concerned about the morals of the country. He has formed the Moral Majority. The pastor works to elect representatives of a certain kind who will go to Washington and make laws that will make this country to be moral as the pastor in Virginia thinks it ought to be moral.

Now I can understand why that pastor in Lynchburg is concerned about the morals of the country. I am, too. They are depraved. I also agree with him on some of his agenda. I want abortions to be less frequent. I want to get rid of pornography. But it is the way he is going about it that amazes me. This man says he is a Baptist, but he is functioning just like the Puritans who ran Roger Williams out of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. The pastor in Lynchburg ought to change the name on his church. It ought to be the Thomas Road Puritan Church rather than the Thomas Road Baptist Church, for this I know: that man is not trying to change the moral climate of this country like a Baptist ought to try to change it.

I have never counseled an abor-

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tion; I hope I will never be put in such a position. I am opposed to abortion. But I am also unwilling to make my abortion position to be the law of the land. I believe in the principle of voluntarism. It is a Baptist idea, and just because the most of the people in this country are living like pagans does not give us the right to abandon our first premise and force those pagans to be moral. All religion and all religious rule ought to be voluntary.

I Believe in a Spiritual Democracy

Popes and bishops had ruled the world of religion with a heavy hand. This rule had gone on for more than 1000 years. So when Baptists emerged from the radical left wing of the Reformation, those first Baptists were determined to have none of pope or bishop. Until this day we have none.

But why were Baptists so set against pope and bishop? Pope and bishop had ruled in the world of religion. The laity were put down, made to conform, and if they did not conform, the laity were imprisoned, even killed. So, in the beginning Baptists would have a genuine democracy among believers.

A few months ago Dr. Barrington White of England was in our church. Dr. White is perhaps our foremost Baptist historian about English Baptists of the seventeenth century. I asked him what those Baptist meetings were like. He said each congregation would have 20 to 30 members. They would gather on a Sunday and sit in a circle. First one would read from the Bible and make comment on what he had read. Then another would read and make comment. The idea that only the preacher would make a sermon was unheard of. All would take part. All would read the Bible and interpret. They had a spiritual democracy.

In our own time this idea con-

tinues. Most of our churches have Sunday Schools. In these Sunday Schools the laity open the Bible and read a passage; then they make comment upon what they have read. Again, we trust the laity with the Bible. In our congregational meetings the laity have a voice and an equal vote. We do this because we believe that the Spirit of God can speak to the laity quite as well as he can speak through the clergy.

Some time ago I was in a meeting with pastors from over our Southern Baptist Convention. We were talking theology. Some of us were asked to give an account of our beliefs about certain doctrines. When this questioning had run its course, I asked one of the fellows if he could now accept us, recognize our place among the Baptist family. He said, and I quote, "No. I could not accept you as a point of conscience. In fact, you could not even teach Sunday School in my church."

I was taken aback. I did not have any idea what he was talking about. Then it turned out that he has a statement that each Sunday School teacher must sign before he or she can be a teacher in that church. This paper is a doctrinal statement that is the approved doctrinal position of that pastor's church. The pastor has decided what his church will teach. He has become a pope.

At the time I thought this practice was singular, that he must be the only Baptist pastor who would do such a thing. Now I find that such practice is growing. More and more churches are letting the pastor draw up a statement of doctrine. All who lead in the church must sign. What a far cry from the first Baptist position.

Who is this authoritarian personage who would tell the laity what they must believe, think? What made him so great, so wise? Does God commune with him and not with us? Is he the intermediary through whom all of our approved truth must flow? Since when? Some Baptists are more Catholic in their practice than some Catholics are in these days. We are so uptight about authority that we

are ready to follow anybody who is authoritarian.

I am proud to be a Baptist when Baptists are Baptist. Here is the Baptist position: The pastor opens the Bible. He reads and explains what he sees in the Bible. But as the pastor is doing this, the laity is thinking. They too have the Bible. They are following, thinking, praying, and trying to follow their own idea of the way the Spirit of God would lead them. If they are impressed that the pastor has a word from God, they take that word to heart. If not, they come again next Sunday looking for that word from God. This is what I want to happen in my church. This is the Baptist way. The laity have become a priesthood; it is called the priesthood of the believer. We have no more important plank in our Baptist platform.

Now, is there risk in this Baptist way? Of course there is. The laity may not stay awake during the sermon. They may care but little about the Bible. Some of the laity may stumble into strange, even wild, doctrines. But this risk is not new. The first Baptists looked at these risks; then they looked at the authoritarians who had ruled over them. They decided they would take their chances putting the Bible into the hands of all the believers. They decided that the common, ordinary believer might err, but so might the pope or bishop err. They decided they would have a spiritual democracy. What has changed that some should fall away from this good Baptist idea?

I Believe in Inquiring Minds

The first Baptists were unafraid to examine the Scriptures. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli are called the leaders of the Reformation. In a sense they were. But all of them were afraid of their own ideas. Luther never dreamed of separating church and state. Calvin had great distrust of the ordinary believer. Zwingli was attracted by the radical ideas of Anabaptists but

backed away. While these men had courage and a kind of stubborn determination to be free of Rome, still they were not willing to let their great ideas run their course.

Quakers, Mennonites, and Baptists were the left wing of the Reformation. No idea was too sacred, no doctrine was too rooted in tradition, for them to examine. So, infant baptism would not be touched by "the reformers." Baptists would decide that infant baptism should be examined in the light of the Scriptures. After the examination, infant baptism was dropped. It is not found in our churches. This is so because those first Baptists were not afraid to inquire, to search the Scriptures.

As a seminarian I was taught this idea by S. A. Newman, teacher of philosophy of religion at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Newman put it this way: Suppose some primitives were walking through the jungle. They stumbled upon a New Testament. By some act of God they were given the capacity to read and understand it. They were totally unmarked by the traditions of the years. No man-made doctrines had been imposed upon them. If those primitives should decide to be Christians, then they would surely form a body of believers. The church they would form would be pure from all the encrustations of tradition. That church would be a Baptist church in form whether in name or not.

Times have changed. Tradition is laying its heavy hand upon us. What a Baptist must believe is becoming pretty well defined. The concrete has hardened. For a growing number, no longer may a Baptist examine the Scripture and follow where it leads. For them a Baptist must now believe the Scripture plus agree with The Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963, and if he or she teaches at any one of our six seminaries, he must sign that seminary's abstract or confessional statement.

What is The Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963? It is the

best wisdom some of our Baptist leaders had at the time. They stated the major doctrines of the Bible as best they could. Did they have all wisdom? Did they have final wisdom? They did not claim it for themselves; so, why should all who now minister in denominational posts be required to swear loyalty to that man-made creed? Since when did it become God's last word for mankind?

And what are these confessions or abstracts? The "Abstract" of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, for instance, is the best statement of doctrine that John Broadus could make in 1859. It is a good statement, but why must all who follow him in that seminary's classrooms be bound by his perceptions of God's truths? John Broadus was just a man. He was a very bright man and a very godly man. But he was still no more or less than a creature trapped in time, limited by the perceptions of the people of his time.

During the thirteenth century there lived a remarkable man. His name was Thomas Aquinas. He wrote a statement of doctrine that is called the **Summa Theologica**. His peers were so impressed that they came to believe that what Thomas had written was the last word in theology. No longer were they to inquire, to search. They had the truth. Their job was to pass it along in an undefiled state. This was the beginning of scholasticism. Inquiry was out. They had the truth. Why should they look further? And of course this meant that the people who were not content to accept the truth as these scholastics perceived it to have been given were declared to be heretics.

What is the difference in what the medieval scholastics did and what has begun to be practiced among us? The Baptist Faith and Message Statement is not God's last gasp. It is a good statement, but it tells us as much about the people who wrote it as it tells us about God. Rather, let us return to the Scriptures. The Scriptures are not behind us. They are before us. They are ahead of us.

We do not have all of the truth; none of us does. Only by inquiring, exploring, seeking can we find the mind of God. But all the while, we know that none of us can know all of the mind of God. Our humanity will not hold his' divinity.

In the present day we see college and seminary professors assailed. Whether they are right or wrong is not the primary question. The primary question is, have they come to their conclusions by seeking the mind of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures? If they have, we may disagree with them, but they have functioned as Baptists. On these grounds alone should these Baptists be evaluated. And they should be praised for inquiring into the Scriptures rather than sandbagging them from behind a wall of tradition. Strange. Some of their most ardent critics pose as the most outspoken defenders of Scripture. It is one thing to defend Scripture; it is another thing to search the Scripture. The Scriptures may take us in new directions.

Baptists have always produced more than their share of trailbreakers. In our own time we have seen Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Clarence Jordan, and Carlyle Marney. Each broke new ground. Each was painfully biblical. I do not agree with them on all points, but each was a Baptist in his bones. He was not afraid to inquire. He used the Scriptures as the last, basic frame of reference. And he was not seeking the approval of the group; he made his appeal to God.

Being a Baptist is confusing these days. Is the name being used as it was of those courageous, plucky, radical reformers who were the first Baptists? Or when the word is used, are we referring to tradition-bound, narrow, frightened little people who are in search of security?

When Baptists today are like those first Baptists, then I am proud to be a Baptist.

Cecil Sherman is pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, North Carolina.

Religious Freedom and the Public Schools

by James Dunn

Two specific problems related to religious liberty trouble Baptists with regard to public education: tuition tax credits and the so-called "prayer" amendment. Both are on the immediate agenda.

Tuition Tax Credits

"Public money for public purposes" is not a bad motto. The failure to meet that test of public policy is the greatest fault with tuition tax credit plans.

On June 22, 1982 the Reagan administration submitted its tuition tax credit plan to Congress. For the first time in the history of the United States a President offered legislation for aid to parochial schools and religious exercises in public schools.

More than a dozen tax credit plans have been introduced in Congress, most allowing a taxpayer credit on his income tax for a certain amount of his private or parochial tuition costs.

The best known 1981 version of the recurring bad idea is the one introduced by Senators Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY) and Robert Packwood (R-OR). It would return to the taxpayer by means of a tax credit 50 percent of parochial school tuition up to \$250.

What's wrong with this approach to aid to education?

It's unconstitutional. As Senator Ernest F. Hollings says, "In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court's *Nyquist* decision reaffirmed the position of our Founding Fathers by striking down a New York tuition tax credit plan because it violated the First Amendment's 'establishment clause' " (*Washington Post*, March 14, 1981).

No one can escape the conclusion that public funds benefit the sponsoring church. The net result is that the taxpayer is forced to subsidize reli-

gion, and overwhelmingly one brand of religion at that. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."

Senator Moynihan does not deny that the constitutional problems exist, but with an attitude beneath the responsibility of the U.S. Senate says, "Pass the suspect legislation, let

The results of such welfare for the well-off would be free choice for those with money and compulsory miseducation for the rest.

It's expensive. Estimates vary from \$4 billion to \$6 billion annual costs, depending upon the exact plan passed. A tax credit is labeled "tax expenditure" and is just as much a cost to taxpayers as any other budget line item. Odd, isn't it, that at

“The results of such welfare for the well-off would be free choice for those with money and compulsory miseducation for the rest.”

the courts decide.”

It's regressive. It would offer aid to the people who need it least. The poor who do not want their children in available church schools or who cannot afford them, even by supplementing the tax aid, must fall back on public schools. Many parents do not have enough income to benefit from a tax credit. The half of the population with more modest incomes would be left out in the cold.

The Reverend Paul Schetelick, co-pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Newark, says, "We can fool ourselves and say we are serving the poorest of the poor, but people on welfare can't afford our schools" (*New York Times*, April 24, 1981). Sharing this view is Dr. James S. Coleman, author of the new report praising parochial schools. He "fears that tuition tax credits would mostly aid wealthier families, who pay substantial income taxes, and do little or nothing for disadvantaged minority students" (*RNS*, April 24, 1981).

the time of slashing federal aid to education some senators are pushing for this sort of spending? As Senator Everett Dirksen once said, "You spend a billion here and a billion there and before long you're talking about real money."

It's inflationary. Such an incentive from federal policy would make for wild escalation in the cost of private education. Father Bredeveg of the National Catholic Education Association testified for tuition tax credits before the last Congress indicating that "it would enable us to increase tuition."

Moynihan admits that tax credits might lead to higher tuition. The *New York Times* predicts that the "cost of this uncontrollable entitlement could rise spectacularly" (*New York Times*, March 10, 1981).

It's unfair. The larger rather than the smaller church schools would be favored. The parochial systems already in place would have a distinct advantage. There is even a regional advantage for the Northeast quarter

of the country. Six of the seven cities with the largest percentage of school children in church schools are Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

To appeal for fairness because "parents of private and parochial school children pay both taxes and tuition" is to advance an odd principle of tax equity. The elderly, singles, and couples without children support public services in general and don't whimper for tax credits to evade supporting public education.

It's divisive. This sort of state support for church schools would arouse the competitive worst in church folks. They'd be rooting for tax credit advantage like an overlarge brood of hungry piglets. The person who doesn't think Christian leaders would come to that needs to reexamine his understanding of original sin.

Americans are already sharply divided on the issue. A Gallup-*Newsweek* poll (March 1981) revealed that 34 percent favored an income tax credit, 52 percent opposed it and 14 percent were undecided. Legislative flimflam that codifies the will of a vocal and pushy minority never makes for tranquility.

The divisiveness would cut far deeper in the social fabric than competition between church schools. Some of the troubles in Northern Ireland today stem from the school systems which have prevented children from mingling and knowing one another.

It's destructive of the public schools. The future of public education is at stake. A government subsidy would place a bounty on the head of school children for their withdrawal from the public schools. Joseph A. Califano, Jr., former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, describes tuition tax credits as a "devastating blow to public school education in this country," a proposal that "stands the American tradition of public education on its head" (*Dallas Times Herald*, Febru-

“The most intimate and inner expression in religion would be drafted, conscripted, and dragged from its rightful setting where it is tenderly taught and spiritually shared.”

ary 27, 1978). Carl Rowan fears that if such a scheme were made law, "The public school systems will become a crippled outpost for children of families so poor that, even with tuition tax credits, they can't send their children to private schools" (*Dallas Morning News*, March 1978).

It's undemocratic. There would be a sort of taxation without representation if tax credit maneuvering prevailed. The decisions regarding private and parochial schools would be made beyond the reach or influence of the taxpayer. Public schools have their problems responding to the 16,000 local school boards. But, that's democracy at work.

It's dishonest. To use the parents' tax credit for a conduit to get tax monies into private and parochial schools is shady. The constitutional tests have made it clear that it's not right to try to do something indirectly that is directly forbidden. Such a subterfuge is unworthy of the U.S. Congress.

It's intrusive. Government regulations would inevitably and legitimately follow an alternate school system in which the public had such a vested interest. Thomas A. Shannon, executive director of the National School Boards Association, contends that, "Without strict regulation, there would be no way to prevent the subsidies provided through tax credits from helping schools that endorsed values of communists, the Ku Klux Klan or other groups" (*New York Times*, April 23, 1981). Andrew Greeley, noted Catholic sociologist, and others oppose tuition tax credits because of increased government control of parochial schools.

One of the great strengths of private and parochial education is found in the freedom from government intervention. It would be sad to see

that freedom swapped for a mess of tax credit pottage.

President John F. Kennedy understood the perils of public support for private and church related schools. He said, on September 15, 1960, "I believe in America where the separation of church and state is absolute . . . where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference." Government's duty is to leave private schools alone.

Religious Exercises in Public Schools

Big Words for Bad Consequences

Words carry a peculiar freight, trigger a reaction in specific settings. The "school prayer" debate involves some odd words, four to seven syllables long.

Consider **secularization**: simply to transfer from ecclesiastical to civil use. More precisely, to make secular: "that which is of or relating to the worldly or temporal as distinguished from the spiritual or eternal."

Secularization is exactly what would happen to prayer if some folks had their way. The most intimate and inner expression in religion would be drafted, conscripted, and dragged from its rightful setting where it is tenderly taught and spiritually shared. Prayer would be put into uniform and forced to do civil duty, to tote the values of the common culture, to bear the burdens of pop religion.

Prayer, as in "school prayer," is a component of civil religion. It is of necessity watered down. Whether prescribed by some level of petty authority like the teacher on the beat or the spontaneous outbursts of self-anointed spiritually superior students,

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it's watered down worship. There is something cheap about making prayer come under civil service and being used to "quiet the kids down."

Isn't it ironic that folks who quake at the danger of secular humanism are the very ones pushing for prayer in the public schools, an ultimate secularization?

Consider **trivialization**. We live on several planes, but they intersect and intertwine. One cannot and should not attempt an arbitrary division between the sacred and the secular. Christians accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life.

Yet, it is possible to put down, make light of, reduce to ridicule, The Holy. Abraham Heschel, a great man of faith, spent his life attending awe as the ultimate emotion. Louis Cobb said, "The bump of reverence on the American head is a dent."

Great hunks of humanity in this country see nothing wrong with "using" prayer. If we who have given our lives to Him Who Was and Is and Ever Shall Be mean what we say and sing on Sunday, we will resist trivialization.

Next, think about **reductionism**. For some, school prayer may not be tainted by this term. If prayer is nothing but ritual, mechanical observance, surface activity that has little if anything to do with heartfelt religion, it doesn't matter. If prayer is repeating rote phrases without engaging the mind, who cares what goes on in school. If, however, you are dedicated to soul freedom and put prayer at the center of life, you care.

If so-called school prayers are effective, compelling, and meaningful then they constitute indoctrination, evangelization, and they have no part in the patterns of public school life.

If, on the other hand, the praying is weak-kneed and wishy-washy, a poor imitation of the real thing, then it constitutes a threat to authentic

“On the other hand someone has suggested that public school prayer to be fair would have to be addressed ‘to whom it may concern.’”

religion, contradicting what is being taught at home and church or synagogue. School "praying" can work like a flu shot. An inoculation of diluted deism can make some children immune, or at least resistant, to real religion.

Mr. Justice Stevens was correct in calling school prayers "compelled ritual." That's reductionism.

Now look at **reversionism**. Rewriting history is a growth industry of the Fundamentalists who have recently come alive to their civic duties. It takes the place of study and research. It portrays Colonial America as a Christian nation. In fact, less than 20 percent of those people had any church connection. It portrays the founding fathers as great men of the faith. In fact, some were bounders, others were deists, and all were sons of the Enlightenment. It minimizes the dedication of the framers of the Constitution to Jefferson's "wall of separation" between church and state.

In evaluating recent history the advocates of religious exercise in the public classroom moan that all our present ills stem from "putting God out of the schools" (as if the Heavenly One could be carted about). In fact, school prayers have been faithfully and widely practiced in other countries. They haven't brought idealistic Islam to Iran, churchgoing to England, religious toleration to Belgium, sexual morality to Sweden, freedom of thought to Spain, or peace to Northern Ireland. They pray in schools there. Come on, now! Don't rewrite history. Tell the truth.

Collectivization is another real danger in our world. We don't need homogenized culture and religion in this country anymore than it is needed in communist lands. Part of our strength is in our pluralism and diversity. If we had prayers in public

settings, they could be Buddhist in Hawaii, Mormon in Utah, Baptist in Mississippi, Roman Catholic in New Mexico, and Black Muslim in the Bronx.

On the other hand someone has suggested that public school prayer to be fair would have to be addressed "to whom it may concern."

Lowest-common-denominator religion is not worth much to anyone. Emil Brunner criticized collectivism saying that it makes up society "like briquets of so many pulverized individuals." Moves to approve school prayers are steps toward collectivization.

One more word: **authoritarianism**. The dictionary says it is "of, relating to, or favoring a principle of often blind submission to authority as opposed to individual freedom."

Most of the folks who support "returning prayer to the schools" have never thought about how such a practice fosters authoritarianism. It does so especially with the dedicated and caring teachers of small children. Most often these teachers do not want that role. They'd reject it if they could. Many, if not most, of them understand that for prayer to be real it has to be free. They're not interested in "favoring a principle of blind submission," particularly when it comes to religion.

Most Americans support individual freedom. We hate authoritarianism.

Explain these words to your Congressman, will you? The Supreme Court was right to reject government meddling in religion and all attempts to legalize school prayers.

Unneeded, Unwanted, Unworkable

I'll not equivocate. Mr. Reagan submitted his prayer amendment, May 17, 1982. He has recently indi-

cated his continued support for it. It's unneeded, unwanted, and unworkable.

Unneeded. What kind of conservative would uproot the First Amendment, changing the Bill of Rights for the first time since its adoption in 1791? Robert W. Kas-tenmeier, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, says it's "an attempt to alter the historic interpretation of a key feature of the Bill of Rights."

Most of us believe that the Constitution should be amended only under the most extreme circumstances. Odd, isn't it, how many of the very people using that argument against the ERA suddenly see wisdom in radically altering the First Amendment?

Unwanted. Most major religious bodies have seen the folly of this meddling in religion. Why? Could it be that someone is playing politics with prayer? It's no use to say, "What harm can come from prayer in schools?" Ask the parents of dead children in Northern Ireland what harm can come from politicized prayer in schools.

Dr. J.M. Price, dean of religious education in Southern Baptist life, used to say, "We are as responsible for those whose (religious) experiences we bungle as we are for those we never reach at all." How many people do you know who have no use for the church because when they were children they had church crammed down their little throats?

“Practically every constitutional authority who has commented has opposed the ill-conceived amendment.”

Don't tell me there's no harm in forced religion.

Of course, there have been some overreactions on the part of educators to the present limitations. I heard of one muddle-headed principal who patrolled the lunchroom yelling at students who silently bowed their heads to say a blessing. Stupid!

Why, pray tell, does anyone think there'd not be excesses if the so-called "prayer amendment" would pass? We'd have more evangelistic trap services in school assemblies. Courses in Christian doctrine would spring up in the flavor of the local majority. Don't tell me there's no harm in forced religion.

Unworkable. One conservative columnist has suggested, "It's odd to see the same people who don't want sex education, because that isn't the proper role of the public schools, inviting the same secularized educators they distrust to supervise religious observances."¹ Why? Maybe playing politics with prayer?

Practically every constitutional authority who has commented has opposed the ill-conceived amendment. That includes the Solicitor General of the United States, Rex E.

Lee. When he was dean of the Brigham Young University Law School, shortly before joining the Reagan administration, he asked in one of his books on constitutional law, "What does the Government gain by requiring or authorizing school prayer in the public schools? In most cases, the recital is a sterile exercise, a group exercise totally lacking in individuality, spontaneity, or real expression of conviction. To the extent that any students pay attention to the words, some will believe them, some will find them irrelevant, and to some they will be positively offensive."² Why? Is someone, perhaps, playing politics with prayer?

Footnotes

¹Joseph Sobran, *The Des Moines Register*, Saturday, May 15, 1982, p. 8a.

²Yale Kamisar, "Yet Again, School Prayer," *New York Times*, Op. Ed. Page, May 17, 1982.

James Dunn is executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

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Bill To Establish National Lottery Introduced In Congress

by Larry Braidfoot

A bill which would establish a national lottery has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Congresswoman Cardiss Collins of Illinois. With the introduction of this bill, the debate about the legitimacy of gambling as a means of raising revenue for state and local governments has now been extended to the national level.

The economic crises which have threatened governments in the United States at all levels have been used increasingly in recent years as a justification for legitimizing various forms of gambling. Proponents of pro-gambling legislation invariably paint rosy pictures of the financial benefits to be derived by the government which legitimizes lotteries, casinos, and pari-mutuel betting. Concerned Baptists and other concerned Christians in states such as New Mexico, Texas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Missouri—just to name a few—have had to contend with highly organized and extensively financed lobbying efforts seeking to win approval for legalized gambling. At the present time, at least 47 states have accepted one form or another of legalized gambling.

The legislation introduced by Congresswoman Collins would designate the government's share of the income from such a lottery for the Social Security fund. This familiar argument, which seeks to alleviate financial stress by developing a new source of income for government, is made at a time when the economic crisis is posing serious questions about the economic stability of the Social Security program.

Congresswoman Collins envisions a national lottery generating approx-

imately \$21 billion in income for Social Security in the next seven years. Part of her rationale is the argument that establishment of a legal national lottery would draw billions of dollars currently being channeled into illegal gambling. She contends that billions of dollars currently being gambled in illegal activities associated with organized crime would be rechanneled into legal means of gambling which would produce revenue for the national government.

Such an argument sounds very antiseptic, very clean. The picture of gambling as a socially acceptable activity is one in which gambling is a type of recreational activity conducted with funds that are disposable and nonessential to the welfare of the family. A national lottery simply amounts to a form of taxation on recreation. Statistics are offered in support of such a perspective.

The gambling issue is one which unfortunately has been ignored in too many Christian circles. Baptists have been among the leaders in opposing gambling interests in several states over a period of years; but because not enough concerned Christian citizens have taken gambling with sufficient seriousness, the current debate is of crucial importance. We simply must do a better job of resisting the inroads of this highly organized lobby.

What do we know about gambling? We know enough to convince us that bad morals make for bad politics and bad economics. It is clear that states which establish lotteries do more than simply set in operation an activity which will produce revenue for that state. Conversation with the

director of one state lottery disclosed the different stages of development which that particular lottery had undergone. The first form of lottery tried appealed primarily to senior citizens, who had the patience to wait until the weekly payoff but meager funds with which to purchase the necessary tickets. The next form of lottery attempted was one which appealed primarily to blue-collar workers. Still searching for the greatest amount of revenue possible, the state established a third form of lottery which was considered to have stronger appeal to white-collar workers, who supposedly represent the greatest source of untapped income.

Not only does the state establish a lottery, but in search of increasing sums of money, the lottery is modified and changed to achieve the maximum amount of revenue for the state. In short, the state becomes a promoter of gambling, not just a beneficiary of revenue dollars.

What else do we know about gambling? We know that a large percent of the people who gamble are individuals with marginal incomes. This is true regardless of the form of gambling involved. When the energy crisis shook our society in the 1970s, the casinos in Nevada experienced a decline in business. This decline was attributed to the rises in gasoline prices and air travel expenses. Can anyone seriously think that the wealthy and the affluent members of our society were deterred from their activities by increases in gasoline prices and air fares? The individual with marginal income is the individual who is unable to take a weekend trip to a Nevada casino.

In 1980, while businesses and industries in metropolitan areas lagged because of the recession, the racetracks were doing a booming business. A reporter from the *Wall Street Journal* discovered that even the operators of the racetracks admitted that the unemployed individuals of that area were flocking to the racetracks in large numbers, with a sense of desperation about them. They sought to escape financial stress and disaster by wagering small sums of money with the hope of big returns. Even the state which sought to evolve a form of the lottery which appealed to white-collar workers continues to have greater participation in the lottery by blue-collar workers.

What else do we know about gambling? We know that the link between gambling and organized crime is still a serious link. A bill has been introduced in Tennessee which

would legalize betting in connection with both horse and dog racing. An administrator of the Kentucky Racing Commission appeared before a Tennessee legislative committee and indicated the need for very informed, sophisticated means of regulating the industry to prevent organized crime from infiltrating and dominating it. When an individual associated with the regulation of the gambling industry feels so strongly that the tie between gambling and organized crime is still an existent one, how can legislators and representatives so easily conclude that all that is needed is to establish a legal form of gambling and the tie would be dissolved?

What else do we know about gambling? We know that proponents of gambling consistently and almost universally overestimate the amount of income to be generated for governments by this activity. In 1982,

the 15 states with state lotteries expected to receive only about \$1.5 billion in net revenues. Each form of gambling could be examined, and the same result could be found. Gambling simply does not produce the amount of revenue predicted.

What then shall we do with this matter? We should resist its spread and its encroachment upon the domain of decency in government and upon the integrity of the family. Gamblers Anonymous estimates that there are six million compulsive gamblers in the United States. Should government be the promoter of an activity which affects millions of lives and families as gambling does? No! This is not a problem to be taken lightly. It strikes at the very heart of the fabric of our society. We must resist it.

The Bible and America

by Larry Braidfoot • Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee

Citizenship education for Christians is essential for the effective participation of Christians in a democratic society. *The Bible and America* was written to provide a readable introduction for Christians to the issue of Christian involvement in government.

An examination of the biblical materials provides the basic framework with which this book examines some of the contemporary political problems and issues in the United States. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament have specific teachings about the functioning of government and how the Christian is to relate to government. Although different forms of government are to be found through-

out the Bible, government exists to serve purposes for which God established it. The Christian can have hope for the government under which he or she lives, regardless of its form, because God is at work to transform the world, including its governments.

Within the United States, many different organizations have been established which seek to provide an avenue for involvement and expression of concern. One of the chapters classifies and describes many of the various groups which are active in the political life of this nation. These groups play an influential role, although they frequently are unnoticed.

Two of the major issues associ-

ated with Christian citizenship—separation of church and state and the danger of civil religion—are treated. The concept of separation of church and state is one which is being threatened on the one hand by actions of government and on the other hand by proposals of some religious organizations. Civil religion in the Bible is examined in an attempt to find guidelines for understanding the dangers which civil religion poses.

The book concludes with a chapter which briefly describes the struggle to establish peace, justice, and compassion as meaningful values expressed in our form of government.

Peace with Justice

The Things that Make for Peace

by Ronald D. Sisk

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace . . ." (Romans 14:19, KJV). But how? What does it mean in concrete terms to follow after peace in a world of imminent nuclear peril? Clearly the apostle Paul's instruction to the church at Rome is more easily written than realized. That the New Testament teaches peace with justice as a fundamental characteristic of the Christian life is obvious to many Southern Baptists. How to go about achieving that peace in the real world we face in the 1980s is considerably less clearly understood. What is necessary is that we respond to the biblical imperative toward peacemaking with specific initiatives toward peace. Practically speaking, Scripture suggests at least four elements which should be considered in formulating a theology for pursuing "the things which make for peace."

Peace is revealed as a promise of the Kingdom. Jesus came as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise of a "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). At his birth the angels proclaimed "peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, KJV). In both Old and New Testaments the messianic vision is of the rule of God over people, nations, and nature in harmony with the divine purposes for creation. Jesus came to begin in earnest the process of the world's conversion from its old, wicked war with God to the peace that was meant to be.

The ultimate peace of the Kingdom is envisioned as an end to the struggles and strivings of this present existence. In the Old Testament, Isaiah sets forth the most dramatic version of the vision. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares

and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4, KJV). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be

tion. One cannot be in harmony with God and in disharmony with humankind. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (1 John 2:9, KJV).

Yet in any conflict between the

“ . . . peace is a Kingdom life style which is to be acted out in the earthly relationships of those who are at the same time citizens of this world and citizens of heaven.”

full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9, KJV). In the New Testament, the Revelation to John depicts a decisively redeemed world in which "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4, KJV). In that world, the wars and strivings and pain which arise from human sinfulness will be replaced by the peace of God. We shall exist in right relationship both with God and with one another. In the Kingdom, there will be peace.

Peace is received as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Both Jesus and Paul speak of peace as an experience which comes as part of living in right relationship with God (John 14:27 and Philippians 4:7). Reminiscent of the Old Testament concept of *shalom*, peace is experienced by the Christian as that wholeness and well-being which come from surrendering one's life to the purposes of God. Such an understanding of peace is vigorously spiritual, without permitting spiritualiza-

two, the relationship with God is primary. The individual experiences peace, not as the absence of conflict, but as the presence of fellowship with God. Maintaining peace with God may require declaring war on specific earthly evils. "Peace which passes understanding," however, is available to the Christian in the midst of circumstances as adverse as those which afflicted Paul as he wrote those words from a Roman jail (Philippians 4:7). Jesus' declaration that he came not to bring peace but a sword is thus perhaps best understood as Stagg does as a "warning that to follow him invites hostility, rejection, or even death."¹ The peace with God which one receives by virtue of right relationship may actually work against absence of conflict in one's earthly relationships.

Nonetheless, peace is expressed through social relationships. Jesus commended "peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). Paul directed the Romans to do "the things which make for peace." Both the Sermon on the Mount and substantial sections of Paul's epistles focus on how to make peace both

within and beyond the fellowship. Peace in the New Testament sense cannot be accurately understood as an esoteric religious concept divorced from worldly concerns. Rather, peace is a Kingdom life style which is to be acted out in the earthly relationships of those who are at the same time citizens of this world and citizens of heaven.

Several factors in the New Testament witness, moreover, suggest the logical extension of the obligation to pursue peace beyond the merely personal into Christians' corporate political life. Most importantly, Jesus himself was vitally concerned with the political life of the Jewish nation. He wept for the peace of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-42). He steadfastly resisted the Zealot option of military rebellion against Rome. He taught restraint in dealing with military occupation (Matthew 5:41). He declared the use of violence a deadly trap (Matthew 26:52). He drew no lines between personal and political conduct but established a single standard of righteousness for all.

Similarly, Paul's instructions about peace in the twelfth to fourteenth chapters of Romans intertwine personal and political teachings. In a situation in which the church had been accused of fomenting disorder, Paul drew no line between civic and religious virtue, but admonished Christians to be good citizens. Peace, as a part of Kingdom existence, applies as a principle of conduct for all of life.

Peace is pursued by taking the "surprising initiative."² Again and again, both through teaching and example, Jesus drives home the point that peace must be sought by taking specific, creative, often unexpected steps toward reconciliation. The New Testament itself is the story of God's surprising initiative toward peace with humankind, sending his Son to demonstrate his love

“Again and again, both through teaching and example, Jesus drives home the point that peace must be sought by taking specific, creative, often unexpected steps toward reconciliation.”

for us. Jesus counseled us to take the unexpected initiative toward peace by going the second mile, foregoing vengeance, eschewing judgment, doing “good to them that hate you” (Matthew 5:44). In short, he suggested a specific formula for disarming an enemy at the point of motivation. Peace is best achieved by transforming hatred into love, by restoring wholeness to broken relationships, by answering aggression with creative initiatives toward reconciliation. For Jesus, that meant the sacrificial love of the cross.

Needless to say, it is at this point which the continuity between personal and political life is most strained, as Reinhold Niebuhr argued so forcefully nearly half a century ago. How can nations turn the other cheek? Can we ever expect governments to do what Christ seems to demand of individuals? No, we can't. Instead, we must fall back on a threefold understanding which draws both on what has been said above and on a broader understanding of Christian theology. First, the Hebrew concept of peace as *shalom*, wholeness, well-being, offers an image of the concrete goals for which Christians are to strive in their political dealings. We seek peace by working for justice, the specific God-given human right to well-being of individuals and nations. Any step toward justice is necessarily also a step toward peace. Secondly, the brokenness of this world means that this side of the *eschaton* peace will never be completely achieved. Human sinfulness will not allow it. Steps toward peace which individuals and governments

do take will always be incomplete and flawed. Nonetheless, thirdly, individuals and nations stand always under the judgment of God and the specific, urgent command of Scripture to do the things which make for peace.

In summary, we work toward peace with justice in this world by working for specific, concrete, physical expressions of a spiritual reality, that ultimate peace which comes only through God in Jesus Christ. We do it by doing what we can, by taking the kind of surprising initiative which Jesus taught and exemplified. The specifics will vary with each situation. Peace cannot be achieved by simple surrender to evil. Force may sometimes be necessary, though it should always be used with reluctance and a keen awareness of the brokenness which its use reflects. But whatever the method of the moment, the goal remains the same—reconciliation, well-being, *shalom*, peace.

Footnotes

¹Statement in an address by Frank Stagg, Louisville, Kentucky, August 6, 1982.

²I first heard this interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount from Dr. Glen Stassen, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

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.

World Hunger

Our Church and World Hunger

by John B. Daley

In the past several years the crisis of world hunger has captured the attention of the Christian community. Religious organizations have placed this concern in a priority position in their work. World Hunger Day has an established date on our denominational calendar.

As our denominational agencies began to give attention to this need, our church took notice and responded. The beginning was a shared response by the leader of our Woman's Missionary Union and the pastor. We simply noted World Hunger Day, making it the focus of the morning sermon and taking a special offering. The offering was minimal.

Our interest and concern for world hunger increased. Someone told our W.M.U. leader of the "rice bowl" offering method being used in another state. It was agreed that our church would make the rice bowls available for the membership to use over a three months period. This was done in the spring with good results. It was repeated in the early fall leading up to another World Hunger Day emphasis. Again the results were good.

We used this promotion for two years, one year coupled with a special Cambodian emphasis. The offerings in these years were \$2,832 and \$2,038.

In the fall of 1981 I had prepared my Hunger Day sermon. I was expecting a good offering again as we collected the rice bowls. But I was not satisfied. Surely we could do more. Someway we needed a greater blessing for both those giving and those receiving the offering.

As I was musing about this, the idea came to mind that many of the members of our congregation regularly ate out for Sunday lunch. Most others had a quality lunch at home. My thoughts were to suggest to our people that each week as we con-

sidered what we would spend for Sunday lunch, we give one dollar each to help feed the hungry of the world.

I made a chart with places for 100 names and by each name left spaces for each Sunday in the year. That Sunday I used the chart to make the challenge to our church as a part of the hunger sermon. The people responded readily.

The hunger chart is placed on a wall in the church vestibule above a table holding the hunger box and leaflets telling of hunger needs and Christian response.

The plan followed is that each person signs his name on the chart. Then each Sunday the individual places his dollar in the box and checks the appropriate date after his name. The financial secretary takes information from the chart for the

quarterly and yearly personal giving reports to the members.

There are two benefits gained from use of the chart. It is a reminder to each person to make his offering. More important, however, it is a reminder to each one of us of the hunger need of others and how richly we are blessed.

We are beginning our second year with the hunger chart. The results of the first year were 96 people participating, giving an offering of \$5,762 to help meet the hunger needs of the world. This is double our hunger offerings in the previous two years.

We are blessed in this continuing emphasis. It is a simple plan that works for us. Perhaps it will work for others.

John B. Daley is pastor of Brook Hollow Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.



**"Feed me with the food that is my portion."
Observe World Hunger Day
October 9, 1983**

Book Review

The Wounded Parent

by Guy Greenfield • Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House

Many of the books which are concerned with family life for Christians have one of two primary emphases. Emphasis is usually placed on either the relationship between the husband and wife or upon the roles of the parents in child rearing. Books with an emphasis upon the latter usually focus upon the skills necessary to perform adequately as parents. *The Wounded Parent* does something both different and vitally helpful. The book focuses upon the parent as a sufferer who experiences a wide range of human emotions in attempting to be a good parent. It is about and for parents who have felt hurt, angry, frustrated, confused, rejected, offended, embarrassed, used, abused, disappointed, unappreciated, and/or resentful as they experience the anguish of parenthood.

Guy Greenfield is a father, a Christian, a churchman, a pastor, and a teacher. He currently is professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. Only an individual with his varied background could produce a volume that is both informed and sensitive to parents who are seeking better understanding of their personal experiences with their families.

Most parents are familiar with both the formation of dreams for their children and the disintegration or shattering of those dreams. The influence of the peer group and other cultural influences produce tensions and provide alternatives which are destructive to the child so loved by the parent. Often this results in a rejection of the parent's value system, life-style, church, love, and even

the parent. In the midst of this rejection, what is the meaning of love and of hope?

If these are feelings and questions which you, or someone you know, have had, Greenfield offers some words of hope for you. Emotions and feelings of stress and strain can be managed. You can even cope with the feelings of jealousy and the desire to compare children, feelings which are almost inevitable when other children seem to turn out better than yours. It is even possible to overcome the temptation to blame someone else and to escape the trap of wondering how you as a parent could have acted differently.

One of the keys for overcoming feelings of failure and for entering into a relationship with one's child is a sense of community and sharing with others who are wounded parents. The comfort that comes from sharing honestly with others who have experienced frustration and heartbreak provides the assurance necessary to launch out into a healing process that restores hope and recreates dreams. Judgment gives way to respect. Listening and trusting become more real. For the Christian, a new understanding of self is possible as the power of God is experienced and as we understand the way in which God suffers.

Alcohol Awareness: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Parents

The growing problem of alcohol among teenagers makes this 32-page teaching/learning guide a must for use in your church or with youth and/or parents on retreat.

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Book Review

Is This Divorce Really Necessary?

by R. Lofton Hudson • Nashville: Broadman Press

R. Lofton Hudson is a prominent marriage and family counselor who has made a significant contribution to the Christian community. His most recent book, *Is This Divorce Really Necessary?*, is another indication of the professional training and Christian commitment which he brings to the field of counseling.

This book is an important book about not only divorce but also marriage. Hudson believes that divorce is not inevitable even when the marriage is beset with problems such as immaturity, anger, and even an extramarital affair. These are real problems with which many marriages must struggle.

In describing marriage, Hudson gives a major emphasis to commitment. The reader is encouraged to focus on factors which affect this commitment: marital expectations; concepts of roles, values, religious experiences; and a number of other factors. Since marriage is for real human beings who are in the process of maturing, these factors are vitally important in shaping and sustaining marital commitment.

One of the more helpful chapters in the book deals with extramarital affairs. Hudson not only gives the reader a perspective on the consequences of an affair, but also sheds interesting light on the psychological processes involved. "One of the crazy things that human beings do in our culture is get themselves involved in affairs that go nowhere but up a dead-end street. I refer especially to the complicated, and usually secretive, love relationships which aim at enjoyment and happi-

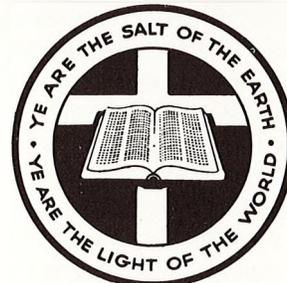
ness but head straight into a stone wall." Affairs frequently slip up on people, are very diverse in nature, and entangle those involved in them in a web of grief. Continuation of the affair is perilous and heightens the pain of the relationship. What is to be done about the affair? It must be terminated by a process involving honesty, responsibility, a new way of thinking, and a concern for the future.

The last two chapters present a strong emphasis upon grace and appropriation of the Bible's teachings about marriage and divorce. Grace in marriage serves to counter tendencies of legalism and perfectionism which both stifle the individuals and become yardsticks with which mates are accused. One of the signs of grace is the willingness to forgive. ". . . if there was the readiness to forgive, or even the withholding of judging and recriminations and the accumulation of injustice feelings, many of the people I see in counseling would not need to seek help. They would have growing marriages."

Because of Hudson's skillful writing, this book can be read at several levels. The lay person without background and training in counseling will find the book very readable and easily understandable. The person who has a measure of training will see at a second level the expertise and the insight which Hudson has developed in his years as a counselor. The book will be helpful to pastor and denominational worker as well as to the person who is simply concerned about having a healthy marriage that does not end in divorce.

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Foy Valentine, Executive Director
Larry Braidfoot, Editor
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Duann Kier, Editorial Assistant



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